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Participatory Fan Culture and the Phenomenon of Celebrity Worship in Indonesia: An Analysis of the Artist Raffi Ahmad through the Perspective of Henry Jenkins' Theory

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Abstract - This study seeks to examine the phenomenon of participatory fan culture and practices of celebrity worship surrounding Indonesian artist Raffi Ahmad by applying Henry Jenkins' theoretical framework on media convergence and participatory culture. This research is designed as an intrinsic case study, focusing specifically on the Indonesian digital ecosystem to provide an in-depth understanding of a particular cultural phenomenon and to avoid overgeneralization beyond this context. Using a qualitative research design, the study employs digital content analysis combined with virtual ethnography to explore how participatory practices and celebrity worship are constructed and sustained among Raffi Ahmad's fans across multiple digital media platforms in Indonesia. The results show that fans are not positioned merely as passive audiences, but rather as active participants and content producers, or prosumers. They actively create and circulate fan-made content such as video edits, memes, reaction videos, and promotional materials related to RANS Entertainment. Furthermore, fans develop strong parasocial relationships facilitated by real-time interactions through live streaming features, which reinforce the perception of two-way intimacy between the celebrity and his audience. The research also identifies processes of absorption that, in some cases, evolve into addictive patterns of media use. These are reflected in behaviors such as continuous monitoring of celebrity-related content, fear of missing out (FOMO), and habitual doomscrolling. From a psychological perspective, Raffi Ahmad's content provides emotional comfort for some fans, while for others it functions as a form of digital escapism from everyday pressures.

Keywords: participatory culture; celebrity worship; parasocial relationships; media convergence; content analysis

Introduction

The phenomenon of the relationship between celebrities and fans has undergone a profound transformation over the past two decades. In Indonesia, the development of the entertainment industry, the convergence of digital media, and changes in information consumption patterns have created new spaces for interaction between the public and public figures. One of the most prominent artists in this context is Raffi Ahmad, who is known as a multi-platform celebrity with a remarkably strong digital presence. Raffi Ahmad's popularity is not built solely through television, but also through social media channels such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram, positioning him as a central figure within Indonesia's digital cultural ecosystem. In this landscape, fans are no longer merely passive consumers; instead, they have become active actors who play a role in shaping, disseminating, and producing narratives about their idol.

The concept of participatory culture, introduced by Henry Jenkins (1992, 2006), provides a relevant theoretical framework for understanding this phenomenon. According to Jenkins, participatory culture refers to a condition in which the boundaries between media producers and consumers become increasingly blurred, allowing fans to interact more actively, engage in content production, and participate in shaping meanings around cultural texts. In his book *Textual Poachers* (1992), Jenkins describes fans as "poachers" who appropriate, modify, and reinterpret cultural content according to their own interests. Meanwhile, in *Convergence Culture* (2006), Jenkins emphasizes that technological developments have fostered collaboration between old and new media, resulting in complex and multidimensional patterns of consumption and participation.

In the Indonesian context, massive digital media consumption patterns intensify the emotional bonds between celebrities and fans. Fans of Raffi Ahmad not only watch his television programs, but also follow his family vlogs, reproduce content, engage in fan discussions, and redistribute particular narratives across digital platforms. This reflects the process of media convergence, which enables information about a celebrity to circulate and be reproduced by fans across multiple channels. Such conditions strengthen fan attachment and expand the influence of celebrities.

The phenomenon of celebrity worship has become a significant aspect of contemporary culture. Aruguete and colleagues (2024) argue that celebrity worship is not merely an individual psychological phenomenon, but is also rooted in social and media dynamics. Fans may experience deep emotional attachment, develop parasocial relationships, and even display compulsive behaviors toward specific public figures. The Absorption–Addiction model proposed by Aruguete et al. (2024) suggests that this involvement begins with a process of absorption, in which fans feel imaginatively connected to a celebrity, and may progress to an addictive stage characterized by irrational behaviors.

In another study, McCutcheon et al. (2024) found that celebrity worship is associated with doomscrolling practices, particularly when fans continuously seek the latest information about their idol. This condition aligns with the digital cultural phenomenon in Indonesia, where updates about Raffi Ahmad appear almost every minute across various media platforms. Celebrities like Raffi Ahmad, who are highly active on social media, indirectly encourage fans to maintain constant connectivity, thereby increasing the potential for parasocial involvement as well as compulsive content consumption behaviors.

Parasocial interaction constitutes a crucial foundation for understanding fans' attachment to celebrities. Jarzyna (2020) emphasizes that parasocial relationships have intensified in the digital media era, particularly during the pandemic, when face-to-face interactions became limited and social media emerged as a primary space for social interaction. Parasocial relationships are inherently "one-sided," yet they create a strong illusion of intimacy between fans and celebrities. In the Indonesian context, this phenomenon is especially evident in interactions between fans and Raffi Ahmad, particularly through the everyday family content of the "Sultan Andara" household produced on the RANS Entertainment YouTube channel. The public display of personal life narratives reinforces fans' perceptions that they know Raffi Ahmad personally and intimately, even though the relationship is not reciprocal.

This phenomenon of parasocial relationships has also been addressed in studies on social media and K-pop fandom in Indonesia. Syawal (2023) demonstrates that Indonesian fans build parasocial intimacy through digital interactions, creating emotional relationships despite the absence of direct contact. Although the study focuses on K-pop fandom, Syawal's findings are highly relevant for describing the dynamics of Raffi Ahmad's fandom, given the similar patterns of content consumption and fan participation. Fans are no longer merely content consumers; they actively shape narratives,

debate issues related to their idol, and participate in digital campaigns that reinforce the celebrity's public image.

Wei and Huang's (2024) study highlights that celebrity worship may be associated with mental health conditions, particularly among young adults who are in the process of identity development. In the Indonesian context, fans of Raffi Ahmad come from a wide range of age groups; however, the majority of active social media users who consume content from RANS Entertainment are adolescents and young adults. This indicates the relevance of the relationship between the dynamics of celebrity worship and certain psychological conditions that may potentially influence mental well-being.

Furthermore, Yang et al. (2023) found that social anxiety can increase an individual's tendency to engage in celebrity worship, with mobile phone dependency acting as a mediating factor. Individuals with high levels of social anxiety tend to seek emotional escape through parasocial relationships with celebrities. When related to the Indonesian context, the high level of digital device usage, widespread internet access, and the dominance of online entertainment culture may further strengthen this tendency. Raffi Ahmad's content, which is light, humorous, and highly personal, may function as a form of "digital escape" for some of his fans.

In addition, Zsila et al. (2024) developed a short version of the Celebrity Attitude Scale (CAS-7) to measure the intensity of celebrity worship across broad populations. This instrument suggests that levels of fan attachment can be classified into low, moderate, and extreme categories. By understanding these levels, research on Raffi Ahmad's fans can gain clearer insights into the dynamics of motivation, behavior, and psychological impacts within the phenomenon of celebrity worship in Indonesia.

On the other hand, the development of live streaming technology and real-time interaction has further strengthened parasocial relationships. Kowert and Daniel (2021) describe the phenomenon of a "one-and-a-half-sided parasocial relationship" in the context of live streaming, where celebrities occasionally respond to fans' comments, creating the illusion of a two-way relationship that is stronger than traditional parasocial interactions. As Raffi Ahmad frequently engages in live streaming across various platforms, fans increasingly experience a sense of pseudo-intimacy that reinforces their loyalty and participation.

The growing body of research on celebrity worship, parasocial interaction, and participatory culture demonstrates that this phenomenon cannot be understood solely from a psychological perspective, but must also be analyzed within social, cultural, and technological contexts. Jenkins' theory is fundamental in explaining how fans participate in the production of meaning surrounding celebrity content across multiple media platforms. Fans of Raffi Ahmad, for instance, do not merely consume content, but also play an active role in shaping the artist's public image through comments, fan campaigns, fan edits, and social media responses. This participation creates an ecosystem in which fans and celebrities mutually reinforce each other's presence.

Despite the growing body of research on celebrity worship and parasocial interactions, most of the existing literature focuses primarily on global fandoms, particularly K-pop, which are characterized by highly organized fan communities, transnational media circulation, and industry-driven content production. While these studies provide valuable insights, they do not fully capture the dynamics of celebrity-fan relationships in local digital ecosystems like Indonesia. Specifically, the case of Raffi Ahmad presents a distinctive configuration different from previously studied fandoms. Unlike K-pop idols managed within a highly structured entertainment system, Raffi Ahmad operates as a multi-platform, family-centered digital celebrity whose content blurs the boundaries between public appearance and private life.

Furthermore, Raffi Ahmad's digital ecosystem, particularly through RANS Entertainment, is not simply a content distribution platform but functions as an integrated media network where production, distribution, and fan participation occur simultaneously. This creates a hybrid space where fans engage not only as audiences but also as co-producers of meaning within a specific cultural context shaped by Indonesian values, norms, and media consumption patterns. Existing studies on K-pop fandom or celebrity culture in general have not sufficiently addressed this localized, personality-oriented, and family-focused digital ecosystem.

Therefore, this article seeks to understand the phenomenon of celebrity worship in Indonesia through a case analysis of Raffi Ahmad, using Henry Jenkins' theoretical perspective. This approach is essential for examining how participatory culture, media convergence, and parasocial relationships interact in shaping patterns of fan attachment to celebrities.

Therefore, examining Raffi Ahmad's fandom is necessary to fill this gap by providing a context-sensitive understanding of how participatory culture, parasocial relationships, and celebrity worship operate within the Indonesian digital media environment. This study contributes to extending Jenkins's framework beyond the context of global fandom by situating it within specific socio-cultural and technological contexts.

Material and Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach based on digital content analysis and virtual ethnography to understand how participatory culture and the phenomenon of celebrity worship are formed through fan interactions with Raffi Ahmad across various digital media platforms. This approach is chosen because the study aims to explain the dynamics of meaning, interaction patterns, and engagement processes that emerge organically within digital environments without conducting direct interviews with fans. These methods have been widely applied in studies of parasocial relationships, fan culture, and celebrity worship in contemporary social media contexts.

The research adopts an intrinsic case study design focusing on the phenomenon of fan engagement with Raffi Ahmad within the Indonesian digital media landscape. Raffi Ahmad is selected as the subject of the study due to his high public visibility and extensive media ecosystem, encompassing YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter. The highly active content production of RANS Entertainment provides an ideal environment for analyzing participatory practices and patterns of fan media consumption.

The study is conducted entirely in the digital domain by utilizing data from the following sources:

(1) YouTube (RANS Entertainment): video comments, live chat interactions, and engagement metrics (likes, shares);

(2) Instagram (@raffinagita1717, @rans.entertainment): comments, reposts, and fan edits;

(3) TikTok (hashtags related to Raffi Ahmad / RANS): duets, stitches, reactions, and fan-generated content; (4) Twitter/X: public discussions, trending topics, and fan debates; (5) Fan-generated platforms, such as meme pages and digital fan communities.

The data analyzed consist exclusively of publicly accessible content (public domain), thereby not requiring special permission or direct interaction with informants. The study applies two main techniques:

Firstly, Digital Observation (Virtual Ethnography): Observation was conducted over a period of 6–8 weeks across Raffi Ahmad's official platforms and fan communities. The observation focused on: Patterns of fan comments (praise, identity adoption, defense, content interpretation); Intensity of interaction in live chats; Practices of content reproduction (remixes, memes, TikTok duets); Fan activity across platforms (cross-platform movement); Collective responses to specific uploads or events.

All observations were documented through daily logs and screenshots for systematic documentation.

The selection of 200–300 comments and 20–30 fan-generated contents was guided by the principle of data saturation, which is central to qualitative research. Rather than aiming for statistical representativeness, the study prioritizes depth and thematic redundancy. During the coding process, patterns of fan interaction, such as expressions of affection, identity alignment, defensive behavior, and content reinterpretation began to recur consistently across platforms after approximately 180 comments and 18 fan-generated contents. Additional data beyond this point did not produce substantially new codes or themes, but instead reinforced existing patterns. Therefore, the final dataset range (200–300 comments and 20–30 fan edits) was considered sufficient to achieve saturation and ensure analytical robustness while maintaining feasibility within the scope of an intrinsic case study.

This approach aligns with established qualitative research standards, where sample size is determined by informational adequacy rather than numerical thresholds. The emphasis on cross-platform variation (YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter/X) further strengthens the validity of saturation, as recurring themes were observed consistently across different digital environments.

Secondly, Qualitative Digital Content Analysis. The analysis covered: 200–300 representative comments from YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok; 20–30 fan edits or fan-created content; 5–10 live streaming sessions related to Raffi Ahmad or the RANS family; Trending topics involving Raffi Ahmad during the research period.

This analysis employed thematic coding techniques to generate consistent and meaningful themes. The study follows the thematic analysis framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) through the following stages:

(1) Data familiarization. Re-reading comments, re-watching fan-generated content, and reviewing observational documentation;

(2) Initial coding. Assigning codes to textual and visual data, such as affection, identification, intensity of support, fan collaboration, digital dependency, and cross-platform interaction;

(3) Searching for themes. Grouping codes into broader themes such as active participation, parasocial relationships, and digital absorption;

(4) Reviewing themes. Re-evaluating themes to ensure coherence and consistency with the overall dataset;

(5) Defining and naming themes. Conceptually formulating each theme by referring to Jenkins' participatory culture theory and the celebrity worship literature;

(6) Reporting findings. Presenting the findings in an interpretive narrative supported by examples of digital data.

To ensure research rigor, data source triangulation was applied by comparing findings across YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter to assess the consistency of interaction patterns. Additionally, continuous observation of digital communities was conducted to deepen contextual understanding of fan interactions.

In terms of research ethics, all data utilized are publicly accessible. No intervention or direct interaction with users was conducted. Personal account identities are anonymized in the report to protect privacy. All digital data are securely stored and used solely for academic purposes.

Result and Discussion

Based on the analysis of data from digital observations, five main themes were identified that explain the dynamics of fan interactions surrounding Raffi Ahmad within Indonesia's digital media ecosystem. These findings illustrate how participatory culture, parasocial relationships, digital absorption, as well as psychological and social dynamics operate simultaneously in shaping the phenomenon of celebrity worship toward Raffi Ahmad.

The study found that Raffi Ahmad's fans demonstrate a very high level of active participation in producing and distributing digital content. Fans do not function solely as consumers but also as content producers (prosumers), for example through the creation of fan edits, memes, compilations of humorous moments from the RANS family, and reaction videos to vlogs from RANS Entertainment's YouTube channel. They are also actively involved in posting comments, resharing content, and even engaging in indirect promotion of Raffi Ahmad's projects, such as the launch of new content, brand campaigns, or philanthropic activities. This level of engagement makes fans feel that they are "personally involved" in the life of Raffi Ahmad's family, fostering a sense of ownership and emotional closeness to the celebrity figure.

The research also reveals the presence of deep parasocial attachment between fans and Raffi Ahmad. Most informants reported experiencing a sense of "closeness" to Raffi Ahmad, despite never having met him in person. Interaction through live streaming features plays a crucial role, particularly when Raffi Ahmad reads comments or responds to messages in live chats on YouTube or Instagram. Fans perceive these interactions as personal, reciprocal, and authentic. The intensity of this perceived closeness varies: some fans merely follow the content casually, while others exhibit more extreme forms of involvement, such as tracking nearly all of Raffi Ahmad's activities across multiple platforms, frequently discussing him in everyday conversations, and even experiencing emotional emptiness when Raffi Ahmad does not upload content for a certain period of time.

A theme of digital absorption and the potential for digital addiction also emerged. Many fans stated that their sense of closeness initially began as a casual interest in RANS Family content but gradually evolved into an intensive routine, such as monitoring every update, repeatedly opening applications to ensure that no new content had been posted, and experiencing anxiety when unable to keep up with the dynamics of Raffi Ahmad's activities (the phenomenon known as "fear of missing out," or FOMO). Several informants also described "endless scrolling" (doomscrolling) on accounts related to Raffi Ahmad as a habit that was difficult to stop.

The study further identified dual psychological and social impacts. On the positive side, many fans reported experiencing emotional comfort from watching Raffi Ahmad's content, particularly his daily life vlogs, which are perceived as entertaining and fostering a sense of familiarity. They also mentioned that following Raffi Ahmad's content helps reduce stress and serves as a "safe space" from the pressures of real life. Within fan communities, social solidarity is formed, as fans support one another, share content, and collaborate in producing creative works. However, negative impacts were also observed, such as excessive dependence on content as a form of escape from personal problems or feelings of loneliness.

This phenomenon is further reinforced by media convergence, which enables fans to move across platforms—from YouTube to Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter—to continuously follow Raffi Ahmad's activities. The synergy between official content and fan-generated content reflects practices of content recontextualization through processes of "textual poaching," as described by Henry Jenkins. Real-time interactions through live streaming features enhance the sense of intimacy, further blurring the boundaries between content producers and consumers.

Raffi Ahmad and RANS Entertainment thus represent a clear example of how celebrities and fans now coexist within a convergent media ecosystem that dynamically shapes and influences both parties. The research findings can be summarized as follows:

Table 1. Research Findings

Theme	Research Findings
Active Fan Participation	Fans produce fan edits, memes, reaction content, and are involved in campaigns and promotional activities for RANS content.
Parasocial Attachment	Fans feel emotionally close; live chat interactions strengthen the illusion of a two-way relationship. The intensity of closeness varies.
Digital Absorption & Addiction Potential	Fans shift from ordinary consumption to dependence on updates; FOMO and doomscrolling behaviors emerge.
Psychological & Social Impacts	Raffi Ahmad's content provides entertainment, emotional comfort, and community solidarity, but some fans use it excessively as a form of escape.
Media Convergence	Cross-platform interactions, synergy between official and fan-generated content, and the practice of "textual poaching" as described by Jenkins.

The findings above reflect how Henry Jenkins' theories of participatory culture and convergence culture are highly relevant in the context of Indonesian celebrity fandoms such as that of Raffi Ahmad.

Participatory Culture and "Textual Poaching"

Jenkins (1992), in *Textual Poachers*, argues that fans are not passive consumers but rather "poachers" who appropriate elements of popular culture to be reworked and reproduced into fan-created works. The theme of active participation among Raffi Ahmad's fans is highly consistent with this idea. Fans remix videos, create memes, or produce fan edits based on moments from Raffi Ahmad's or RANS' content. This demonstrates that fans function as creative agents, rather than merely as recipients of content.

Furthermore, within convergence culture (Jenkins, 2006), old and new media increasingly blend together: fans use vlog videos (YouTube), Instagram, and TikTok as "arenas" for creation and participation. These interactions show that Raffi Ahmad's official content is not the end of the narrative journey, but rather the beginning of a "conversion cycle" in which fans reproduce and redistribute their own versions of the content.

Raffi Ahmad's fans' participatory culture also illustrates how practices of textual poaching are not merely individual activities, but develop into organized and collective practices. Fans share, imitate, and modify one another's content, creating networks of meaning production that extend beyond the

control of official content producers. In this context, fan works such as memes, fan edits, and reaction videos function as media of social interpretation, through which fans negotiate identity, emotion, and affiliation with the celebrity figure. This process demonstrates that media texts do not possess a single fixed meaning, but are open to reinterpretation based on fans' experiences and interests. Consequently, Raffi Ahmad's fans play an active role in shaping a dynamic and sustainable popular culture ecosystem.

Parasocial Intimacy and the Illusion of Closeness

Parasocial intimacy in the context of Raffi Ahmad's fans is not merely emotional in nature, but also shapes media consumption routines that become internalized in fans' everyday lives. Many fans adjust their daily schedules to follow live streams, newly uploaded vlogs, or Raffi Ahmad's digital activities across various platforms. This pattern creates a sense of continuity and stable presence, as if the celebrity has become part of the fans' personal lives. Over time, repeated exposure can deepen affective attachment, as fans feel they come to know Raffi Ahmad's personality, values, and life dynamics more intimately. In this way, parasocial relationships function as a substitute for social relationships, providing a sense of security and emotional closeness.

Furthermore, the illusion of closeness in parasocial relationships is also influenced by celebrities' communication strategies that emphasize authenticity and spontaneity. The presentation of informal everyday content, such as family interactions, lighthearted humor, or seemingly natural emotional responses, strengthens perceptions of authenticity among fans. This perception encourages fans to develop deeper empathy and emotional involvement, even though the relationship is structurally one-sided. In line with the arguments of Kowert and Daniel (2021), moments in which celebrities respond to their audience, even briefly and non-personally, are sufficient to affirm feelings of being acknowledged and noticed. As a result, parasocial intimacy not only reinforces fan loyalty, but also increases the potential for excessive emotional attachment within the digital media ecosystem.

Parasocial interaction constitutes one of the key foundations of fan attachment. Jarzyna (2020) emphasizes that in the digital media era, particularly during the pandemic, parasocial relationships are intensified as face-to-face interactions become limited and social media functions as a substitute social space. In the case of Raffi Ahmad, the use of live streaming (YouTube, Instagram) and daily vlogs allows fans to experience a sense of "as-if real" presence: they see aspects of Raffi Ahmad's private life, hear his voice, and observe his reactions, all of which strengthen the illusion of closeness.

The structure of this parasocial relationship is further reinforced by the "one-and-a-half-sided parasocial relationship" model discussed by Kowert and Daniel (2021). They argue that during live streaming, celebrities occasionally respond to viewers' comments, creating the illusion of two-way interaction. This is evident among Raffi Ahmad's fans, who feel that their comments or chats are "seen" and sometimes "responded to" (even if not always personally), thereby strengthening emotional bonds.

In addition to these dynamics, the findings from the 6–8 weeks of digital observation also reveal indications of negative implications associated with parasocial intimacy. Several patterns emerged from user comments and interactions that reflect excessive emotional involvement. For instance, a number of fans consistently monitored Raffi Ahmad's daily activities and expressed concern or speculation when no new content was uploaded within a short period of time, indicating a form of dependency on continuous updates. In some cases, fans engaged in intrusive discussions regarding Raffi Ahmad's private and family life, including parenting decisions, household matters, and personal relationships, suggesting a blurring of boundaries between public content and private life.

Furthermore, instances of defensive and aggressive behavior were identified in comment sections, where fans reacted strongly to criticism directed at Raffi Ahmad or his family. These responses often involved collective defense, personal attacks against critics, or attempts to control the narrative surrounding the celebrity. Such patterns demonstrate how parasocial attachment may extend beyond emotional closeness into protective and sometimes confrontational behaviors within digital spaces.

These empirical observations indicate that parasocial intimacy, while fostering a sense of connection, may also contribute to problematic forms of engagement, including heightened surveillance of the celebrity's activities, diminished sensitivity to privacy boundaries, and intensified emotional dependency. Therefore, the phenomenon is not only characterized by positive affective bonds but also by ambivalent consequences that are directly observable within the Indonesian digital media context.

The Absorption–Addiction Model and the Intensity of Celebrity Worship

The Absorption–Addiction model indicates that the intensity of celebrity worship does not emerge suddenly, but rather develops through a gradual process influenced by the frequency of media exposure and the depth of fans' emotional involvement. In the context of Raffi Ahmad, easy and continuous access to everyday content across multiple digital platforms accelerates the transition from mild attachment to more compulsive engagement. When content consumption becomes associated with emotional regulation, such as alleviating stress, loneliness, or boredom, the risk of addiction increases. Therefore, this model helps explain how celebrity worship can simultaneously function as a source of psychological comfort and as a potential vulnerability within fans' digital media consumption patterns.

Aruguete et al. (2024) introduce the Absorption–Addiction model within the framework of celebrity worship, in which the initial absorption stage (fans feel attracted and imaginatively connected) may evolve into addiction (compulsive engagement and obsessive behaviors). The analysis shows that many fans begin in the "absorption" phase, enjoying vlogs and consuming content casually. However, some fans report having entered the "addiction" phase, characterized by repeatedly checking social media for updates, experiencing anxiety when missing content, and using social media as a form of "escape."

These findings are consistent with research by McCutcheon et al. (2024), which demonstrates a relationship between celebrity worship and doomscrolling behavior. In the case of Raffi Ahmad, some fans become deeply embedded in continuous content consumption patterns, where "endless scrolling" becomes part of how they maintain parasocial connections and achieve emotional gratification.

Psychological and Social Impacts of Celebrity Attachment

The psychological and social impacts of celebrity attachment reveal a spectrum of experiences that cannot be simplistically categorized as entirely positive or negative. On the one hand, involvement in fandom provides spaces for social affiliation, a sense of belonging, and emotional validation, which are particularly important for individuals who experience limited social interaction in real life. On the other hand, when personal identity and emotional regulation become overly dependent on a celebrity figure, parasocial relationships may disproportionately replace real social relationships. This condition has the potential to weaken individuals' capacity to build healthy interpersonal relationships outside digital spaces. Therefore, celebrity attachment should be understood as an ambivalent phenomenon that requires attention not only from fans, but also from entertainment industry stakeholders, educators, and mental health advocates.

Some fans reported that their relationship with Raffi Ahmad provides comfort and emotional support. These findings are consistent with research in online fan community studies, which suggests that interactions within fandom communities and parasocial relationships can be positively associated with well-being (mental health). For example, a study titled Effects of Online Fan Community Interactions on Well-Being by Kim (2023) found that the intensity of interaction with fan communities and parasocial relationships can enhance feelings of social cohesion and psychological support.

However, negative potentials also exist: obsessive and addictive attachments can lead to unhealthy psychological dependence. This aligns with empirical research such as the study on social anxiety and celebrity worship by Yang et al. (2023), which found that social anxiety mediates the strong relationship between smartphone dependence and celebrity worship, particularly among individuals from certain socioeconomic backgrounds. In the context of Raffi Ahmad, some younger fans may become overly absorbed in celebrity content as a means of compensating for social anxiety or as a way to relieve stress. This tendency raises ethical and psychological questions regarding the long-term impacts of highly participatory forms of celebrity worship.

Media Convergence and Fan–Producer Dynamics

Media convergence within fan–producer dynamics further blurs the boundaries between commercial production and cultural participation, as fan activities indirectly contribute to the economic and symbolic value of celebrities. Every form of fan engagement—from comments and reposts to fan edits—not only extends the reach of content but also strengthens platform algorithms that enhance Raffi Ahmad's visibility. In this context, fans function both as distribution agents and as sources of social legitimacy for the narratives constructed by the celebrity. This mutually beneficial relationship demonstrates that media convergence does not merely shape new patterns of consumption, but also

creates increasingly strategic collaborative models between celebrities and fans within the digital entertainment industry ecosystem.

Digital media enable Raffi Ahmad's content ("the producer") and fans ("consumer-producers" or prosumers) to interact within a cycle of convergence. Jenkins (2006) emphasizes that in convergent culture, consumers do not simply receive content but actively contribute through remixing, commenting, and recreating. This is clearly evident in the practices of Raffi Ahmad's fans, who repost official content, create reaction videos, and produce fan edits. These activities generate a "creative ecosystem" in which Raffi Ahmad's narratives are reshaped and expanded by the fan community.

Furthermore, the study From Celebrity Advocacy to Fandom Advocacy published in Public Relations Review (2024) demonstrates how participatory fandom culture can be mobilized for advocacy and social campaigns. In the case of Raffi Ahmad, such potential is evident, for example, in social campaigns involving RANS Family fans: fans can help disseminate positive values, express collective support, and even participate in social initiatives initiated by the celebrity.

Risks of Fanaticism Intensity and Celebrity Safety

The risks associated with intense fanaticism are not limited to the possibility of physical threats, but also include violations of celebrities' privacy in both digital and offline spaces. Fans with high levels of attachment often feel a sense of "entitlement" to a celebrity's personal life, which may drive them to seek personal information, monitor locations, or excessively comment on private matters. Such practices, although often framed as expressions of admiration, can generate significant psychological pressure for celebrities and their families. Over time, the normalization of invasive behaviors may increase tolerance for more extreme actions within fandom culture.

Moreover, the intensity of fanaticism poses serious challenges for artist management in terms of communication and security. Management must balance the promotion of closeness with fans—which is important for sustaining loyalty and popularity—with the need to maintain clear boundaries to protect the celebrity's safety and mental well-being. Overly personalized digital communication strategies may inadvertently reinforce exaggerated illusions of intimacy and foster unrealistic expectations among certain fans. Therefore, a more ethical and structured approach to fandom management is crucial to minimizing the risk of escalating fanaticism while ensuring the sustainability of the relationship between celebrities and their audiences.

As discussed in the celebrity psychology literature, highly intense attachment can pose risks to celebrity safety. In the chapter "Fanning the Flames of Fandom" from the book Stalking, Threatening, and Attacking Public Figures, Spitzberg and Cupach (2008) explain how extreme parasocial attachment and celebrity worship can escalate into stalking behaviors or physical threats. Although no extreme criminal behavior by fans has been identified in the case of Raffi Ahmad, such potential risks still need to be considered by artist management.

Social and Cultural Implications

The social implications of these participatory patterns are evident in the ways fans construct collective identities through their involvement in Raffi Ahmad's fandom. Active participation in content production and circulation allows fans to assert their social position as members of a community that shares common values, symbols, and language. This fandom identity functions not only as a form of entertainment, but also as a source of belonging and social legitimacy, particularly for younger generations growing up within a digital media ecosystem. As such, fandom becomes an alternative social space that shapes new patterns of interaction, solidarity, and social cohesion beyond conventional social structures.

From a cultural perspective, fans' involvement in meaning-making processes also influences how Indonesian popular culture is produced and consumed. Narratives about celebrities are no longer determined solely by mainstream media, but are continuously negotiated through practices of remixing, commenting, and fan discourse in digital spaces. This process promotes the democratization of cultural production while simultaneously challenging the boundaries between cultural expression and commodification. Therefore, the participatory model within Raffi Ahmad's fandom reflects complex contemporary cultural dynamics in which creativity, identity, and industrial interests are deeply intertwined.

Fan participation in the production of content and public narratives surrounding Raffi Ahmad reflects broader sociocultural changes in which celebrities and fans are increasingly interdependent. This participatory model reinforces the notion that fans are not merely passive audiences, but partners in the production of meaning. This aligns with the shifting media paradigm in which contemporary consumers play an active role in the creation of popular culture.

Conclusions

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that the participatory culture of Raffi Ahmad's fans is remarkably strong. Fans do not merely act as passive spectators, but actively recreate content and promote various projects involving the celebrity. The parasocial relationships established between fans and Raffi Ahmad display varying levels of intensity, ranging from casual attachment to more addictive tendencies, with dual psychological impacts: positive emotional support on the one hand, and the risk of dependency on the other. In this context, the Absorption Addiction model is highly relevant in explaining the transition process from initial attachment to compulsive involvement among some fans.

Furthermore, media convergence strengthens the creative cycle between Raffi Ahmad as a producer and fans as both consumers and producers (prosumers), thereby forming a mutually reinforcing media ecosystem. Although the social and emotional benefits of fandom involvement are considerable, potential risks—such as media addiction, stalking behaviors, and psychological pressure—remain serious concerns for artist management and stakeholders within the entertainment industry. Moreover, the replication of fandom advocacy models, as widely discussed in public relations studies, suggests that Raffi Ahmad's fans have the potential to function as active social actors rather than merely passive audiences.

In terms of practical implications, these findings highlight the urgent need for more ethical and strategic management of fan engagement within the Indonesian entertainment industry. Artist management teams should not only focus on maximizing audience engagement, but also actively establish clear boundaries between public content and private life. This includes curating the level of personal exposure shared in digital platforms, implementing moderation strategies in comment sections, and developing guidelines to prevent the escalation of intrusive or harmful fan behaviors.

Moreover, the increasing intensity of parasocial attachment calls for the integration of digital well-being considerations into content production and audience engagement strategies. For instance, management teams may introduce communication practices that subtly discourage excessive dependency, such as limiting overexposure, avoiding continuous real-time broadcasting, and promoting healthier patterns of media consumption among fans. This is particularly important in reducing risks related to emotional overinvestment, online harassment, and privacy violations.

From a broader industry perspective, these findings also suggest the importance of developing ethical standards and protective mechanisms for celebrity safety in the digital era. As fan participation becomes more active and emotionally charged, entertainment stakeholders must anticipate potential risks such as digital surveillance, boundary violations, and collective fan aggression. Therefore, a balanced approach that combines audience engagement with ethical responsibility is essential to sustain a healthy digital ecosystem for both celebrities and their audiences.

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