

Symbolic Interaction in Tiktok's *Live Streaming*: A Study of Influencer-Viewers Engagement

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ABSTRACT

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In the contemporary digital landscape, social media has evolved into a pervasive phenomenon, serving as a medium for communication and interaction in the virtual realm, liberated from the confines of space and time—epitomized by the omnipresent live streaming feature. TikTok, distinguished by its live streaming functionality, emerges as the paramount social media platform, attracting users ranging from influencers to artists. Central to social media interaction is the adept representation of communicative intentions. This research probes the intricacies of TikTok's live streaming feature as a symbolic interaction medium between influencers and their audience. Employing a qualitative descriptive methodology, the researcher elucidates insights derived from in-depth interviews and observations. The study is anchored in Herbert Mead's symbolic interactionism, with a specific focus on the dimensions of mind, self, and society. Findings spotlight that influencers, @ryanjir and @@l0v3ly4c1l within the realm of the mind concept, prioritize augmenting their follower count, @squadcantik3 anticipating financial contributions from the audience to address familial needs. Within the self-concept domain, a subset of influencers directs attention to leveraging symbolic features of live streaming to express their self-concept. Symbols such as likes, comments, shares, and viewers are regarded as potent conveyors of messages pertaining to identity and emotions, particularly within the micro-influencer domain. Concurrently, the audience tends to emulate the self-concept of the influencers they follow. Related to the concept of society, all six informants in this study agree on applying agreed-upon rules and norms, namely the policies and regulations set by TikTok for live streaming.

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1. Introduction

The role of media assumes a paramount significance in contemporary life within the digital era. In this epoch, facile access to information is not only rapid but also extensive, underlining the crucial nature of media (Suri, 2019). The progression of technology over time is indicative of the advancement of human civilization in each epoch (Suri, 2019). The digital era witnesses a notable evolution in media technology, driven by the continuous evolution of communication technology (Eka Putri, 2009). Technological advancements extend beyond industrial domains and permeate media enterprises, reshaping the patterns and concepts inherent in well-established communication media.

This transformation, particularly within longstanding media communication channels, is a testament to the pervasive influence of technological evolution on media landscapes (Eka Putri, 2009). Communication, being an indispensable element, serves to foster interaction within society. The prerequisites for meaningful interaction hinge upon the existence of contact and communication (Nurudin, 2017). The dynamics of contemporary media underscore the intricate interplay between technological progress and societal communication, illuminating the nuanced evolution of established media paradigms in the digital age. As such, the evolving role of media in this digital epoch necessitates a comprehensive understanding of its transformative impact on communication structures and societal interactions.

The evolution of technology, commonly referred to as new media, has become synonymous with the term "internet" in contemporary discourse. According to Suminar et al. (2020), the defining characteristics of new media encompass interconnectedness, accessibility to individual audiences as both receivers and senders of messages, interactivity, diverse utility as an open-ended characteristic, and omnipresence. The recent proliferation of the internet not only enables the transmission of diverse information but also engenders a new reality within the human experience—a materialistic reality manifested in the virtual world (Bungin, 2006 in Huzaini, 2022). This communication technology has become ubiquitous, with contemporary societies commonly using it and commonly known as social media.

The surge in social media usage constitutes a distinctive phenomenon in the current digital era. According to APJII, the internet-connected population in Indonesia reached 77.02% from 2020 to 2022, with a significant portion of 272 million individuals, and a notable 98.64% internet contribution from the 19-34 age group. This underscores the substantial internet user base in Indonesia, particularly among the active social media users who are predominantly in the productive age group. Consequently, the undeniable impact of social media on cultural shifts within society is evident. Various social media platforms host diverse content, yet they share a common purpose—to provide a virtual space for communication and socialization unbound by constraints of space and time, exemplified by the current popularity of TikTok.

TikTok stands out as the most popular and sought-after application globally, originating from the Chinese company ByteDance, which initially launched the short-duration app named Douyin (Saputera, 2021). As of July 2021, Statista's conclusive data reveals a historic milestone for TikTok, with three billion worldwide downloads (Statista, 2021). In Indonesia alone, according to DataIndonesia.id, TikTok boasts 99.1 million active users as of April 2022, positioning the country as the second-largest user base globally, following the United States.

TikTok continues to evolve, introducing innovations and enhancing its platform for more effective media interaction. One notable innovation is TikTok's live streaming feature. Within the realm of social media, TikTok, like other platforms, houses individuals known as influencers. Influencers are figures with a substantial follower base, exerting influence within the social media landscape. Contrary to the conventional labels of 'celebrity-gram' or 'YouTuber,' influencers span various professions, including doctors, athletes, professionals,

activists, or entrepreneurs (Sukma Alam, 2020). Influencers hold the power to shape trends and wield considerable influence over a broad audience.

Moreover, influencers can be classified based on their follower count as nano influencers (fewer than 5,000 followers), micro influencers (5,000 to 100,000 followers), and macro influencers (100,000 to one million followers) (Lyu & Lehto Brewster, 2021). These classifications underscore the diverse impact and reach of influencers within the digital landscape.

The aforementioned insights paint a comprehensive picture of the profound impact of social media, particularly TikTok's live streaming content, on the flow of information and the evolution of communication. It is evident that individuals decide to engage with these social platforms due to social influences in their environment. This decision-making process stems from a motive to continuously utilize TikTok, fostering interaction with their audience. The highly selective nature of the audience, choosing content aligned with their preferences, underscores the fulfillment of user desires on TikTok (Yuliati, 2015).

Fundamentally, human interaction, particularly within the domain of cyber media, relies on the utilization of symbols and the manner in which individuals represent their intended communication to peers (Indriyani, 2022). This activity is intricately linked to the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism, which underscores the relationship between symbols and interaction, with a central focus on the individual (Soeprapto, 2007). Symbolic interactionism exists by virtue of foundational ideas that mold meaning originating from human thoughts (Mind) about the self (Self) and their relationship within social interactions. Ultimately, the purpose is to interpret meaning within society (Society), where the individual is situated.

Symbolic interactionism essentially explains the perspective that seeks to understand how humans, along with others, create a symbolic world and how this world shapes human behavior. In this context, the live streaming feature on the TikTok social media platform can be utilized as a means of interaction between influencers and their audience, capturing the interest of researchers. Based on the background that has been outlined earlier, the research question for this study is, "How does the TikTok live streaming feature function as a medium for symbolic interaction between influencers and their audience?". Therefore, researcher aim to understand how the TikTok live streaming feature serves as a medium for interaction between influencers and their audience.

2. Method

The research conducted by the investigator falls within the purview of qualitative descriptive research. Qualitative research is undertaken with the aim of comprehending phenomena as perceived by the research subjects (Moleong, 2018). Given that this study seeks to delineate the phenomenon of live streaming as a symbolic interaction medium between influencers and their audience on TikTok, the sampling method employed is purposive sampling. This involves the researcher selecting samples by specifying distinct characteristics and collecting data through interviews and observations of specific accounts during TikTok live streams (Hidayat, 2017).

The selection criteria for informants revolve around the classification of micro influencers, chosen for their follower base, which serves as a target audience for disseminating information through their specific video streaming content. The three influencers have different target audiences, including parents, adult males, and teenage girls. The influencer accounts subject to this study are as follows: @squadcantik3, with 59.3 thousand followers, actively engages in daily TikTok live streaming, sharing content about her daily life caring for her three twin children. @ryanjir, with 67.1 thousand followers, actively engages in TikTok live streaming with automotive-themed content. Lastly,

@l0v3ly4c1l, with 11.6 thousand followers, actively engages in live streaming with fashion and beauty content.

The viewers chosen as participants in this study are determined after the influencers finish their live streaming sessions by considering the top viewer or the first-ranked viewer. Viewers selected as subjects for this research include one top-ranked viewer for each influencer after their live streaming sessions, resulting in a total of 6 informants, including three influencers and their respective top viewers.

Table 1. Informants Identification

Name	Tiktok Account	Age	address	Parcicipate as
Siti Julaeha	@squadcantik3	30	Bogor	Influencer 1
Muhammad Ryan	@ryanjir	23	Malang	Influencer 2
Ayudya Putri	@l0v3ly4c1l	22	Surabaya	Influencer 3
Rose Johani	@rosejohani	49	Pandaan	Top viewer 1
Andhika Fajar P.	@dhikasihinfo	22	Ponorogo	Top viewer 2
Indriyanisawati	@nanacomeon	26	Lamongan	Top viewer 3

Source: Research data results

The focal point of this study is the live streaming feature on TikTok as a medium for symbolic interaction. The researcher positions informants as agents of symbolic interaction, aligning with the three foundational concepts of Mead's thinking: mind, self, and society. As articulated by Banister (1994) in Huzaini (2022), an interview is a directed conversation and question-answer session aimed at achieving specific objectives. Interviews are conducted with influencers and their viewers using a semi-structured interview model, involving a core set of questions guiding the interview process. Subsequently, the researcher analyzes the data derived from interviews and observations conducted with six informants, the outcomes of which are expounded further in the results and discussion sections.

3. Results and Discussion

This study was conducted through interviews with subjects meeting the criteria of active micro-influencers engaging in live streaming on TikTok with specific content themes. The selected influencer accounts include @squadcantik, boasting 83.6 thousand followers, focusing on parenting content; @ryanjir, with 68.4 thousand followers, delivering live streams centered around automotive topics; and @l0v3ly4c1l, with 11.6 thousand followers, specializing in beauty and fashion content. The informants in this study consist of three micro-influencers and their top three viewers.

The three micro-influencers play the role of streaming hosts, prompting interviews to uncover the dynamics of their symbolic interactions with individual viewers through the TikTok live streaming feature. In the context of the live streaming feature as a medium for symbolic interaction between influencers and viewers, the researcher positions informants as participants in symbolic interaction, grounding the analysis in the three fundamental concepts of Mead's thinking: mind, self, and society.

A) The Concept of Mind, Self, and Society in Symbolic Interaction between Influencers and Viewers on the Live Streaming Feature of TikTok

1. Mind

Within the concept of mind, there are four stages that elucidate the thoughts and behaviors of individuals in discerning patterns of action, analyzing gestures encompassing sound, movement, and language, discovering symbols, and ultimately attributing meaning to the unfolding interactions (Ayustiani & Saksono, 2019). These stages are interconnected and comprise impulses, perceptions, manipulations, and consumptions.

Impuls

Based on interview findings with three informants, who are micro influencers @squadcantik, @ryanjir, and @l0v3ly4c1l, diverse responses emerged. From the six informants interviewed in this study, @squadcantik and @ryanjir provide reasons for their desire to do live streaming on TikTok, namely because of the substantial number of followers they already have. This is also one of the requirements set by TikTok itself, as live streaming necessitates a minimum of 1000 followers. Meanwhile, @l0v3ly4c1l stated that initially, the intention was simply to greet followers. However, in line with her interest in the beauty field, @l0v3ly4c1l has a desire to engage in TikTok live streaming while also becoming an affiliate. Meanwhile, viewers, as audience members, have the desire to watch live streaming activities of their favorite influencers. Viewers who choose specific things or content based on their preferences are considered selective audiences in the light audience category (Yuliati, 2005). @rosejohani expressed that she uses the live streaming feature to seek motivation. On the other hand, @dhikasihinfo revealed that she shares the same hobby and has known the influencer since before they became viral until now. Similar to the opinion of @rosejohani, @nanacomeon expressed that her desire to watch is based on the need for information, such as product details in affiliate marketing.

The initial actions of the informants commenced with impulses, indicating a desire to engage in live streaming on TikTok. The earliest reactions highlight the influencer's self-functionality (Ayustiani & Saksono, 2019). The findings unveil that two informants, acting as influencers, expressed their motivation for live streaming on TikTok due to their substantial follower count, a prerequisite stipulated by TikTok live streaming, which necessitates a minimum of one thousand followers. Conversely, another informant revealed an affiliative impulse. Based on the interview results, @squadcantik3 and @ryanjir provided reasons for their desire to engage in live streaming on TikTok, namely, due to a large number of followers. This is also one of TikTok's requirements; to perform live streaming, one must have a minimum of 1000 followers. Meanwhile, @l0v3ly4c1l stated that initially, they only wanted to greet their followers. However, aligned with their interest in the beauty industry, @l0v3ly4c1l aspired to conduct live streaming on TikTok while also becoming an affiliate.

@ryanjir and @l0v3ly4c1l had almost similar responses. @ryanjir admitted that gaining many followers is a goal for live streaming on TikTok. Meanwhile, @l0v3ly4c1l also tended to focus on the number of followers on TikTok. However, unlike Siti Julaeha, who was interested in the use of the gift feature, which they felt could meet the needs of their children. The audience's perception also indicated that the most favored feature of TikTok live streaming is the gift feature. Similar to @ryanjir and @l0v3ly4c1l, @rosejohani and @dhikasinfo, as viewers, also judged that the gift feature is the most interesting aspect of live streaming activities on TikTok.

Perceptions

Informants also envisioned themselves when preparing for live streaming on TikTok. @l0v3ly4c1l mentioned that they considered the timing of live streaming at night because, in their opinion, more people watch during that time. Meanwhile, @ryanjir speculated about the activities they would do before starting live streaming on TikTok, such as driving their modified car to showcase it to the audience.

In the perception stage, data analysis from the interview process reveals that perceptions most frequently revolve around the appealing icons of supporting features in live streaming, such as gifts and follower counts. Influencers process information, striving to comprehend what may captivate their followers' attention, leading to the bestowment of gifts and an increase in followers. According to Littlejohn and Foss (2009), individuals envision alternative actions to achieve desired outcomes in the future. Similarly, influencers consider and envision themselves while conducting live streams on TikTok to fulfill their desires.

@l0v3ly4c1l used the notes feature to provide information such as height and weight. On the other hand, @squadcantik3 mentioned that when live streaming on TikTok, they present themselves as they are, in a natural way, such as wearing a house dress. This means that @squadcantik3 expressed that using a house dress during live streaming is a symbol of appearing natural as a homemaker. In this activity, the audience interpreted gestures and symbols performed by the influencer. For example, @rosejohani expressed that taking care of a baby while live streaming and responding to comments from many viewers is extraordinary. Both @rosejohani and @nanacomeon agreed that receiving gifts from viewers is a form of appreciation because the influencer responded to their comments.

Manipulations

In statements made by @squadcantik3, the feeling of gratitude and increased enthusiasm was expressed when knowing that a large number of viewers or views were following their live streaming. Additionally, @ryanjir stated feeling happy when knowing that there were a large number of viewers for their live streaming. However, when the number of views decreased or the live stream's traffic dropped, @ryanjir felt confused because they had to rethink strategies to increase the number of viewers. @l0v3ly4c1l mentioned that by reading comments from viewers, they could understand their interests, making their live streaming activities more interactive.

Comments given by viewers also influence the mindset of influencers in determining the discussion topics for TikTok live streaming. The presence of many viewers in the live stream makes influencers, such as @squadcantik3, more recognizable. @l0v3ly4c1l mentioned that to gain the trust of the audience, the influencer must genuinely use the brand's products during the live session. Meanwhile, @squadcantik3 explained the impact they received, such as becoming more known to viewers who frequently watch their live streams. @ryanjir stated that the type of content displayed during live streaming also affects how viewers comment and react. According to them, netizens or viewers are not loyal if the content is something like giving away money for free because they only want to receive money from the influencer, not for the content's substance.

When interacting with influencers, @dhikasihinfo also influences other TikTok users to join the influencer's live streaming activities. Furthermore, another viewer, @nanacomeon stated that during live streaming, they could obtain information from the perspectives of other viewers who commented. This allows viewers to exchange information through the comment section during a TikTok live stream. Nevertheless, viewers often make efforts to ensure that influencers notice their comments during live streaming.

@dhikasihinfo anticipates their actions when not receiving a response from the influencer by commenting on the influencer's video post on TikTok. On the other hand, @nanacomeon makes an effort by giving likes as much as possible to attract attention from the influencer. In this case, viewers use other features that help them maintain interactivity with their influencers.

In stage of manipulation, language becomes a system of verbal and nonverbal symbols for expressing thoughts and attempting self-understanding (Littlejohn and Foss, 2009). On the audience side, motivations for utilizing virtual gifts are revealed as a form of appreciation for the live streaming content provided by each influencer. This may extend to sharing the influencer's live stream. This signifies that the informants are interested in using symbols in the live streaming feature that convey their intended meanings and influence the

interpretations of these symbols. Symbols such as comments, likes, gifts, and views can influence the feelings or emotions of influencers. This aligns with the assertion that social media facilitates individuals in expressing their inner thoughts (Oktaheriyani et al., 2020). Influencers themselves mention that this interaction affects their feelings, boosting their enthusiasm, increasing recognition, enhancing audience trust, understanding audience interests, and determining specific discussion topics.

Based on interview findings, it was also discovered that viewers anticipate responses from influencers and take various actions when their comments or likes are not acknowledged. Viewers admitted to commenting on video posts to attract the attention of influencers, while others resorted to spamming likes to garner attention. Viewers in the streaming media context are consumers who watch content on mobile devices or computers (Djamaris, 2022). In this context, viewer categories are defined based on time spent consuming content on platforms like TikTok, and viewers selectively choose content that aligns with their preferences.

Consumptions

In the final stage or the consumption stage, viewers, as consumers, comprehend gestures, symbols, messages, and other elements from influencers during live streams and respond to influencers. Viewers comment because they are curious about other aspects that initially captured their attention. Especially when the live streaming is conducted by a highly popular influencer, it can, to some extent, satisfy their curiosity. The informant's curiosity about a particular aspect of the influencer influences their decisions and behaviors, such as giving virtual gifts and numerous likes. Viewers stated their reasons for being in the live stream room for the longest time compared to other viewers. @rosejohani expressed their interest in the triplet babies and wanted to share their experiences as a mother. @dhikasihinfo shared a common hobby with the influencer, and they also mentioned the similarity in their hometowns, where they understand a specific language.

2. Self

Siti Julaeha wanted to express and share the challenges of having triplets. She also revealed her aspiration to be a great and responsible mother in raising her children. Additionally, she aims to be a young mother role model, inspiring her audience, especially those with similar professions, to support each other. @rosejohani as the top viewer of Siti Julaeha's live streaming, expressed their reason for watching, feeling a connection as a fellow mother. As a mother, @rosejohani shared the difficulties of caring for her children, especially when they are twins. Therefore, @rosejohani as a top viewer of the TikTok squadcantik's live streaming, also has the hope of becoming a great and ideal mother, as perceived by the squadcantik.

Muhammad Ryan also expressed his desire to be a well-known figure to gain attention. He wants to show that being an influencer on TikTok also requires closeness with the audience. @dhikasihinfo, in the concept of self, explained that Ryan is one of the admired figures. @dhikasihinfo's reason is that through Ryan's live streaming content, they can channel the same hobby. From the watched live streaming activities @nanacomeon mentioned that Ayudya is an ideal beauty influencer, and they are often influenced by what Ayudya conveys.

In the concept of self, often referred to as the ability to self-reflect from the perspective of others (Soeprapto, 2007), Mead suggests that the concept of self is an ongoing process that integrates both the "I" and the "Me" (Griffin et al., 2019). In this context, the informants, serving as influencers, find it challenging to comprehend themselves as subjects or the "I." Consequently, as objects or the "Me," they depict a self-concept observed through the lenses of others. These "others" are their audience members engaging in the observation of their live streaming activities. As viewers, they also undergo the process of combining the "I" and the "Me." During symbolic interactions on the live streaming feature of TikTok, viewers comment

or use other symbols to express the "I" aspect. As objects, viewers endeavor to position themselves from the perspective of influencers who are interacting with them.

Interview data reveals that the initial motivation for the three informants to use this feature stemmed from already having a substantial follower count. From the habits of the informants as influencers, it is evident that the environment in which they operate influences how they perceive themselves. As stated by Ayustiani & Saksono (2019), in this position, individuals tend to comply with and imitate those who dominate their lives.

TikTok's live streaming provides symbols that assist influencers in conveying messages about their self-concept to the audience. This aligns with the statement that identity reinforcement through language and society can be visualized through symbolic interaction media (Virginia, 2022). Based on interview results, the three informants, serving as influencers, strive to increase their follower count to have a larger audience during live streams and attain a stronger presence. Additionally, the virtual gifts received by influencers energize their sense of appreciation. Features within TikTok's live streaming assist them in constructing their self-concept, aiming to be better known, responsible, credible, and amiable. In the role of viewers, there is a tendency to mimic what dominates and influences them.

3. Society

Based on the responses from the influencers, the norms and cultures often applied during live streaming refer to TikTok's policy regulations. Siti Julaha or @squadcantik mentioned that she tried their best not to make their child cry to avoid child exploitation violations. @ryanjir stated that they try to avoid suspicious activities, such as smoking during live streaming. Meanwhile, @l0v3ly4c1l revealed the importance of wearing modest clothing during live streaming to avoid indecent elements. As for viewers, they expressed similar answers regarding norms and cultures related to live streaming. @rosejohani, @dhikasi agreed on the importance of good commenting etiquette during live streaming on TikTok, as mentioned by @dhikasiinfo, especially when interacting with strangers or unknown individuals. Similarly, @nanacomeon stated that comments should be filtered to prevent the spread of hatred.

According to Mead, the concept of society entails a community that plays a pivotal role in shaping the thoughts and identity of an individual. In this third concept, the ultimate aim is to interpret meaning within a community where the individual resides (Eka Putri, 2009). The Generalized Other, within the societal concept, manifests as shared expectations and social norms understood by the informants as rules and policies established by TikTok. Consequently, in the societal concept, the inference can be drawn that influencers and viewers are integral components of the virtual community within the realm of TikTok, a social media platform. The online community is formed as each individual aligns with the agreed-upon rules and norms, specifically the regulations set forth by TikTok live streaming.

B) Form of the Tiktok Live Streaming Feature Symbol that Influencers Use with Audiences

Based on interview findings, micro influencers perceive TikTok's live streaming feature as a symbolic interaction medium to convey their messages. Influencers attribute significance to symbols such as virtual gifts, ranking symbols, shares, interactions (likes and followers), and host and guest feature icons. These symbols, influencers believe, impact their live streaming activities, evident in the quantity and interactivity between influencers and viewers.

The ability to use symbols that have the same social meaning is expressed through language, both verbal and non-verbal, referred to as symbols (Ramby, 2022). This ability enables humans to interpret the meaning of a thought accurately. Various symbolic interactions in the form of verbal and nonverbal symbols were found in the live streaming feature on TikTok. This is particularly evident in the content created by influencers, encouraging viewers to stay longer in their live streaming rooms.

Results from interviews with @squadcantik, @ryanjir, and @l0v3ly4c1l indicate the importance of virtual gift feature due to the benefits it offers to fulfill needs. @ryanjir mentioned that this feature is currently trending and can add to earnings (revenue). However, this feature is considered not to significantly influence them overall, as they go live not just to receive gifts. On the other hand, @l0v3ly4c1l believes that this gifting feature is a symbolic form from viewers to convey messages and boost the spirits of TikTok live streaming creators.

Similar to the statements of @squadcantik, @l0v3ly4c1l, and @dhikasihinfo, as a viewer, also stated that this virtual gift feature is a form of appreciation because the content has motivated the audience. It is also mentioned that sometimes this feature serves as a form of charity to TikTok live streamers. In agreement with @dhikasihinfo, other viewers also consider this feature as a form of appreciation and digital charity.

Influencers mentioned that 'ranking' feature is useful for seeing which viewers give them many gifts, resulting in a higher ranking. Additionally, this feature indicates viewers who spend the longest time watching TikTok live streaming activities. Thus, @ryanjir and @l0v3ly4c1l stated that this feature also helps evaluate the results of live streaming, allowing them to understand what topics attract attention and who is interested, whether followers or non-followers. The three interviewed viewers express their use of virtual gifts as symbols of appreciation for influencer's live stream content. As explained by Purba (2023), viewer sympathy and motivation to give gifts have socio-economic implications for the live stream host. Ranking symbols indicating viewer order during live streams influence influencers to recognize those who stay engaged in the live stream.

Concerning the TikTok live streaming sharing feature, @squadcantik mentioned that it helps liven up live streaming activities. @ryanjir stated that this feature serves to notify followers. In more detail, @l0v3ly4c1l mentioned that this feature provides information on social media other than TikTok in the form of links. Similarly, like the influencers, viewers always use the share feature to reach a broader audience. @nanacomeon stated that this feature is also used to copy the link of the influencer's live streaming activity to showcase the number of viewers who share the live stream. Haimson and Tang (2017) state that symbols like the number of comments from viewers affect the relationship between broadcasters and viewers during live streaming. This implies that an influencer's call to action symbol, such as the "share" icon, impacts live streaming activities by attracting more viewers to join, influencing their interaction.

Like and Followers for interaction icon features like likes and followers, they are essential symbols for the influencers. Informants understand that these symbols influence live streaming activities. @squadcantik3 expressed that a high number of likes during live streaming activities indicates that viewers like the presented live stream content. Meanwhile, @ryanjir stated that the abundance of likes and the number of followers in live streaming activities indicate the level of credibility of an influencer to stay more visible. Similar to @squadcantik's response, the like feature signifies that viewers are interested in the content, as expressed by @l0v3ly4c1l. She also added that an increase in followers creates a closer relationship. Consistent with Shimp's (2013) assertion that influencers must possess characteristics influencing their followers, such as attractiveness and familiarity, symbols indicating follower count can influence other viewers. Familiarity arises from the influencer's popularity, and attractiveness reflects the audience's positive attitude towards an influencer's actions and lifestyle.

The newest feature to be aware of before engaging in live streaming activities is the host and guest feature. This feature is often referred to as the duet feature as it facilitates collaboration with other users. Even @squadcantik mentioned having live-streamed with Bunda Corla using this host and guest feature. @l0v3ly4c1l stated that the host and guest feature is interactive, as it can invite other TikTok users to join in the live stream. Similarly, @ryanjir finds the host and guest feature the most enjoyable as it allows for collaboration and attracts many viewers, including personal followers and even celebrities. Meanwhile, Van

Dijk (2013) posits that social media is a media platform concentrating on user presence, facilitating their activities and collaborations (Nasrullah, 2016). Consequently, new supportive features like Host and Guest foster stronger user relationships, enabling them to reach a broader audience through more engaging two-way communication.

4. Conclusion

Both influencers @ryanjir and @l0v3ly4c1l, in the concept of mind, focus on growing their follower count, while anticipating gifts from viewers to meet family needs. Influencers prepare and maintain interactivity during live streams, and viewers, as selective consumers, choose content based on shared interests and curiosity. In the concept of self, the influencers concentrate on utilizing symbols in the live streaming feature to express their self-concept. Symbols like likes, comments, shares, views, and the audience are perceived as representing messages about self-identity and emotional aspects as micro-influencers to viewers. Meanwhile, viewers tend to emulate the self-concept of the influencers they watch.

As for some suggestions that can be provided regarding the research results for consideration and evaluation by relevant parties, it is advisable to conduct more fundamental or specific scientific studies on features such as live streaming and other symbolic interaction media used by social media users. This would serve as a reference for enhancing the development of social media innovation and social interactions within it.

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