

FULFILLMENT OF AUDIENCE NEEDS AND SATISFACTION ON THE GADGETIN YOUTUBE CHANNEL (NETNOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS)

¹Medeline Grace A. Rahawarin, ²Chontina Siahaan

^{1,2}Communication Studies, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Christian University of Indonesia

¹*medelinegracear@gmail.com* ²*chontina.siahaan@uki.ac.id*

Abstract

One of the most popular digital platforms is YouTube. YouTube plays an important role as a primary source for people in obtaining information and entertainment. One of the YouTube channels that discusses technology-related content is GadgetIn. This channel is known for presenting reviews of technology products such as smartphones, laptops, and other electronic devices. GadgetIn's content creates dynamic interactions, where audiences not only watch the videos but also actively leave comments. Through the comment section, audience engagement can be seen, reflecting their needs and satisfaction toward GadgetIn's content. This study aims to explain how GadgetIn's YouTube content fulfills audience needs and satisfaction. This research uses a qualitative approach with a netnographic method by Kozinets and applies the Uses and Gratifications theory by examining the five types of audience needs. The results show that audiences actively use GadgetIn's content to fulfill informational needs, entertainment needs, personal integrative needs, and social integrative needs through smartphone review content. The fulfillment of these needs then creates satisfaction for the audience after accessing GadgetIn's content.

Keywords: Audience Needs and Satisfaction, GadgetIn, Uses and Gratifications, YouTube

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The development of digital media has significantly transformed the way people access information and entertainment. Digital platforms provide audiences with easier, faster, and more interactive access to various forms of content. In this context, audiences are no longer passive recipients of information but active users who consciously select media according to their needs and interests (McQuail, 2010).

One of the most popular digital platforms today is YouTube. Beyond functioning as a video-sharing platform, YouTube has become an important source of information, education, and entertainment. According to Ruggiero (2020), YouTube enables audiences to actively engage with content through interactive features such as comments, likes, and discussions. This interaction creates a communication environment in which audiences participate directly in the media consumption process.

The popularity of YouTube continues to grow worldwide. Data from WYT Labs indicate that YouTube currently has more than 2.7 billion monthly active users globally. This growth demonstrates that YouTube is not only used for entertainment purposes but also serves as a medium for obtaining information and supporting decision-making processes. The wide variety of content available

allows audiences to choose information that aligns with their individual needs and preferences.

In Indonesia, one of the most influential technology-focused YouTube channels is GadgetIn. Managed by David Brend, GadgetIn has attracted millions of subscribers through its technology review content, particularly smartphone reviews. The channel is recognized for presenting product information in a clear, honest, and easily understandable manner. Besides reviewing product specifications and features, GadgetIn provides recommendations and insights that help audiences evaluate technology products before making purchasing decisions (Zahra, 2023; Setyawan & Putra, 2022).

The large number of subscribers and viewers indicates that GadgetIn has become an important reference source for technology consumers. However, audience engagement is not only reflected in subscriber counts but also in the active interactions that occur within the comment section. Through comments, viewers express opinions, ask questions, share experiences, and provide feedback regarding the content. These interactions can reveal how audiences perceive the content and whether it fulfills their expectations and needs.

Understanding audience needs and satisfaction is essential in communication studies because audiences actively choose media based on specific motivations. McQuail (2010) argues that audiences are active participants who select media to satisfy particular needs. Consequently, differences in audience needs influence how media content is consumed, interpreted, and evaluated.

To understand this phenomenon, the Uses and Gratifications Theory serves as an appropriate theoretical framework. Developed by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch, the theory emphasizes that audiences actively use media to fulfill various psychological and social needs (Kustiawan et al., 2022). These needs include cognitive needs, affective needs, personal integrative needs, social integrative needs, and tension-release needs (Khaffi, 2022). Through this perspective, audience comments can be examined to identify the forms of need fulfillment and satisfaction generated by GadgetIn's content.

Despite the popularity of GadgetIn and the high level of audience interaction within its comment sections, studies focusing on audience needs and satisfaction reflected through comments remain limited. Therefore, this study employs a netnographic approach to analyze audience interactions in the comment section of GadgetIn's most popular smartphone review content. By examining audience comments through the Uses and Gratifications perspective, this research seeks to understand how GadgetIn fulfills audience needs and provides satisfaction to its viewers.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the background above, the research question of this study is: How does GadgetIn's YouTube content fulfill audience needs and satisfaction as reflected in audience comments?

1.3 Purpose and Objective

This study aims to explain how GadgetIn's YouTube content fulfills audience needs and satisfaction through audience interactions in the comment

section. Using the Uses and Gratifications Theory and a netnographic approach, this research seeks to identify the types of audience needs fulfilled and the forms of satisfaction experienced by viewers after consuming GadgetIn's smartphone review content.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Uses and Gratifications Theory

This study employs Uses and Gratifications Theory as the primary theoretical framework to examine how GadgetIn's YouTube content fulfills audience needs and generates audience satisfaction. The theory was introduced by Elihu Katz, Jay G. Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch in 1974 and emphasizes that audiences are active participants in media consumption. Rather than passively receiving media messages, audiences consciously select and use media that they believe can satisfy their psychological and social needs (Wakas, 2021).

Uses and Gratifications Theory focuses on the reasons why individuals use particular media and the benefits they obtain from that usage. According to Kustiawan et al. (2022), audiences actively choose media based on their motivations, interests, and expected gratifications. Therefore, the theory shifts the focus of media research from what media do to people toward what people do with media.

Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch argue that media users have sufficient awareness of their needs and media choices. They actively determine which media can best satisfy their expectations. Consequently, audience satisfaction is achieved when the selected media successfully fulfills the needs that motivate media use.

2.2 Audience Needs and Gratifications

According to Humaizi (2018, as cited in Khaffi, 2021), audience needs can be classified into five categories. These categories are commonly used within the Uses and Gratifications framework to understand audience motivations and media consumption behavior.

The first category is cognitive needs, which refer to the need for information, knowledge, and understanding of the surrounding environment. Individuals use media to satisfy curiosity, gain insights, and acquire information relevant to their interests.

The second category is affective needs, which relate to emotional experiences, entertainment, enjoyment, and aesthetic satisfaction. Media consumption can provide pleasure and emotional engagement for audiences.

The third category is personal integrative needs. These needs involve strengthening self-confidence, credibility, personal values, and decision-making abilities. Audiences may use media to reinforce their beliefs and gain confidence in making choices.

The fourth category is social integrative needs, which concern maintaining relationships and social interactions with others. Media can facilitate communication, discussion, and the sharing of experiences among individuals.

The fifth category is tension-release needs, also known as escapism. These needs involve relaxation, stress reduction, and temporary escape from daily

routines or problems. Audiences may consume media as a form of entertainment or leisure activity.

These five categories serve as the analytical framework in this study to identify the types of needs fulfilled by GadgetIn's smartphone review content and the forms of satisfaction expressed by audiences through their comments.

2.3 YouTube as a Digital Media Platform

YouTube is one of the largest digital media platforms that enables users to access, share, and interact with video content. In addition to functioning as a source of information and entertainment, YouTube provides interactive features such as likes, subscriptions, and comment sections that facilitate communication between content creators and audiences.

According to Sutanto et al. (2021), YouTube allows users to search, watch, and share video content easily through the internet. The platform has become an important medium for information dissemination because it combines audiovisual communication with interactive audience participation. As a result, YouTube is widely used not only for entertainment purposes but also for educational and informational content.

Within technology review content, YouTube serves as a valuable source of information that helps audiences evaluate products before making purchasing decisions. The comment section further enables audiences to express opinions, ask questions, share experiences, and engage in discussions regarding the content they consume.

GadgetIn

GadgetIn is a YouTube channel that consistently produces technology review content. This channel is widely known for its detailed, systematic, and engaging product reviews. GadgetIn's content primarily focuses on smartphone reviews from various brands and price segments, from entry-level to flagship.

2.4 Netnography

This study applies a netnographic approach to analyze audience interactions in the comment section of GadgetIn's YouTube content. Netnography is a qualitative research method developed by Kozinets to study online communities and digital cultures through online interactions and digital traces.

According to Eriyanto (2021), netnography focuses on understanding social and cultural phenomena that emerge within internet-based environments. Digital traces such as comments, discussions, and user interactions become important sources of data for understanding audience behavior and experiences.

In this study, audience comments posted on GadgetIn's smartphone review videos are analyzed as expressions of audience perceptions, experiences, needs, and satisfaction. Through the netnographic approach, the study seeks to understand how audiences interpret and respond to GadgetIn's content based on their own motivations and media needs.

3. Research Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive qualitative research design. The research utilized the netnographic method proposed by Kozinets, as cited in Eriyanto (2021). Netnography was selected because this study focuses on audience interactions occurring in the YouTube comment section. Through this approach, audience comments were analyzed to identify the types of audience needs and gratifications reflected in the comments based on the Uses and Gratifications Theory in GadgetIn's YouTube review content.

Data were collected through a data crawling process. Audience comments were extracted using Visual Studio Code, which was utilized to develop and execute a program for collecting comments from the selected video. The crawling process was conducted on May 8–9, 2026, resulting in 563 audience comments. The collected data were downloaded in Microsoft Excel format, converted into Microsoft Word format, and subsequently imported into NVivo for data organization, selection, and coding.

The data source for this study was a smartphone review video uploaded on the GadgetIn YouTube channel entitled “Saya coba beli HP murah yang populer di TikTok...”, published in 2023. The video was selected because it is one of the most popular smartphone review videos on the GadgetIn YouTube channel, receiving approximately 17,000 comments. From the total comments, 563 comments were obtained through the crawling process. Audience comments were selected using a purposive sampling technique by choosing comments that were relevant to the research focus. The selected comments were categorized according to the Uses and Gratifications Theory, including comments reflecting cognitive needs, affective needs, personal integrative needs, social integrative needs, and tension-release needs.

Data analysis followed the stages of netnographic analysis proposed by Kozinets, as cited in Eriyanto (2021), consisting of coding, noting, abstraction, rechecking, generalization, and theorization. Each stage was carried out systematically using NVivo software to classify audience comments based on the five categories of the Uses and Gratifications Theory. The findings were then interpreted by relating the identified patterns to the main concepts of the theory, namely cognitive needs, affective needs, personal integrative needs, social integrative needs, and tension-release needs.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, this study employed source triangulation by comparing audience comments collected from GadgetIn's smartphone review content to identify similarities and differences in the information expressed by the audiences. In addition, the trustworthiness of the data was supported through a systematic data analysis process based on Kozinets' stages of netnographic analysis, as cited in Eriyanto (2021). These stages enabled the researcher to re-examine the data and research findings, thereby ensuring that the interpretations were consistent and accurately reflected the data obtained.

4. Results and Discussions

This study was conducted on a smartphone review video uploaded to the GadgetIn YouTube channel entitled “Saya coba beli HP murah yang populer di TikTok...”, published in 2023. The video was selected because it is one of the most popular smartphone review videos on the GadgetIn YouTube channel and has a high level of audience engagement.

The research data were collected through a comment crawling process and selected using a purposive sampling technique. Of the 563 comments collected, 459 relevant comments were analyzed using NVivo software through a coding process based on the categories of the Uses and Gratifications Theory.

Based on the research findings, the researcher discusses each category of audience needs according to the Uses and Gratifications Theory.

Table 1. GadgetIn Audience Comment Data

Uses and Gratifications Need Types	Definition	Comment
Cognitive Needs	Which are related to strengthening information, knowledge, and understanding of the surrounding environment. These needs are driven by the desire to understand, master, and satisfy curiosity about the environment.	Comments indicating that the audience sought, obtained, or felt helped by information from the review content.
Affective Needs	Which are associated with aesthetic appreciation, beauty, and emotional experiences. These needs motivate individuals to seek media content that provides enjoyment and emotional satisfaction.	Comments indicate the audience is entertained by the content's delivery style.
Personal Integrative Needs	Which are related to strengthening credibility, self-confidence, stability, and individual status. These needs are rooted in the desire to enhance self-esteem and personal identity.	Comments indicating increased self-confidence or assistance in decision-making.

Social Integrative Needs	Which are associated with strengthening relationships with family, friends, and the broader social environment. These needs arise from the desire to establish and maintain social connections with others.	Comments take the form of discussions, sharing experiences, or interactions between users.
Escapism Needs	Which refer to the need to reduce or relieve stress, escape from problems, and temporarily forget unpleasant situations.	Comments indicating content is watched for relaxation or to fill free time.

Source: Adapted from Humaizi (2018, p.24); processed by the researcher

a. Cognitive Needs

The findings indicate that audiences not only seek information regarding smartphone specifications and quality but also utilize GadgetIn's content as an educational source to understand technological developments and avoid making poor purchasing decisions. One comment reflecting cognitive needs was expressed by an audience member:

@rufalena_1 "Pinter ya, ngejual di tiktok shop, yg akhir" ini sedang trend karena diskon nya dan stigma beli di tiktok shop dapet harga murah, orang yang kurang paham dengan dunia gadget akan tertarik sama barang ini lalu merasa tertipu. Thanks bang david semoga youtuber lainnya atau influencer tiktok, mereview barang" kw walau tau itu kw, agar orang yang kurang mengerti bisa berpikir kembali sebelum membeli."

This comment demonstrates that GadgetIn's review content functions as both an educational tool and a source of information before purchasing a smartphone. The audience member expressed appreciation for the review because it helped people with limited knowledge of technology become more cautious and informed before making purchasing decisions. This finding indicates that GadgetIn fulfills the audience's cognitive needs by providing useful and reliable information.

b. Affective Needs

The findings also reveal that audiences use GadgetIn's content not only as a source of information but also as a source of entertainment. Viewers enjoy

the humorous and engaging presentation style used in the reviews. Several comments expressing entertainment needs include:

@edwiendimas1933 "Gini kan ada hiburan"

@peaxeyoonji "hiburan di kala makan siang wkwk"

@masberry9194 "Edukasi dan comedi campur aduk"

@faisaladi4822 "cape ketawa asli dah, sering2 review hape abu2 gini"

@bongkarae "Wkwkw...mantaap...nice inpoh banget nih bang buat review yg hp gini, biar gk banyak orang awam kena tipu....asli kocak review nya.. "Hp gk ada harga diri" wkwkwkw"

These comments indicate the presence of affective needs through expressions of amusement and enjoyment. The frequent use of words such as "wkwk" and references to the review being funny demonstrate that audiences are entertained by GadgetIn's communication style and humor. At the same time, viewers continue to obtain valuable information about smartphone products. Therefore, the content fulfills both informational and entertainment needs simultaneously.

c. Personal Integrative Needs

Personal integrative needs were reflected in comments showing that audiences used the reviews as a basis for decision-making before purchasing a smartphone. After watching the reviews, viewers felt more confident and better informed when evaluating products. Examples of comments include:

@blaziken7892 "makasi bang udah review ini,, hampir aja tergiur"

@handoko979 "mencerahkan bngt bang,,tdi sy jg mo beli ni hp,,untung ada review dri abng nih ,,sukses slalu bang"

@lintah6235 "Awalnya aku tergiur sama hp ini tapi. Setelah melihat bang david ambox hpnya jadi mikir 2x deh"

@goesgoe1583 "Untung gk kebeli sama gue, hampir aja, ada untung nya aku liat liat youtube dulu sebelum beli"

These comments suggest that audiences gained confidence and personal reassurance after watching GadgetIn's reviews. The content helped viewers avoid inappropriate purchasing decisions and provided guidance in evaluating products. This finding aligns with the concept of personal integrative needs in Uses and Gratifications Theory, where media are used to strengthen self-confidence, personal judgment, and decision-making abilities.

d. Social Integrative Needs

Social integrative needs refer to the desire to establish and maintain social relationships through media interaction. This need was reflected in comments where audiences shared experiences and interacted with other users. Examples include:

@maretho_gmk "Makasih sudah mewakili ,sudah pernah ketipu sama hp paling parah dijual beli online .."

@yongky..3150 "Bener bgt koo saya ketipu hp nya sama klo dihidupkan walcome jugaa,pass dipake lagg bgt ngefrime bgt"

These comments demonstrate that audiences shared personal experiences related to purchasing smartphones and interacted with other users who had encountered similar situations. Through the comment section, audiences created a space for discussion and experience-sharing, illustrating the fulfillment of social integrative needs.

Based on the findings, GadgetIn's smartphone review content fulfills various audience needs as described in the Uses and Gratifications Theory, namely cognitive needs, affective needs, personal integrative needs, and social integrative needs. These findings indicate that audiences actively use YouTube not only to obtain information but also to seek entertainment, strengthen their confidence in making purchasing decisions, and interact with other users through the comment section.

According to the Uses and Gratifications Theory, audiences are active media users who consciously select media to satisfy their specific needs (Katz et al., as cited in Khaffi, 2021). In this study, audience comments indicate that GadgetIn's content is primarily used to obtain information about smartphone specifications, performance, advantages, and disadvantages before making purchasing decisions. In addition, audiences expressed enjoyment of GadgetIn's casual and humorous presentation style, which contributes to the fulfillment of affective needs. Personal integrative needs are reflected in comments indicating that audiences became more confident in choosing smartphone products after watching the review content. Meanwhile, social integrative needs are demonstrated through interactions among users in the comment section, where they exchange opinions, experiences, and recommendations regarding smartphone products.

The findings of this study support the Uses and Gratifications Theory, which suggests that audiences actively select media capable of fulfilling their various needs. The fulfillment of these needs subsequently generates audience satisfaction, as reflected in comments expressing appreciation, trust, enjoyment, and continued engagement with GadgetIn's content.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research indicating that YouTube is used by audiences to fulfill various needs, including cognitive, affective, personal integrative, and social integrative needs. However, this study offers a different perspective by identifying the fulfillment of these needs through a netnographic analysis of audience comments rather than interview data. This approach enables the researcher to observe audience interactions and expressions of gratification in a natural online environment, thereby providing a deeper understanding of how audiences perceive and respond to GadgetIn's content.

Furthermore, the findings of this study also support previous research demonstrating that GadgetIn's review content provides useful and trustworthy information for audiences. While previous studies primarily focused on the quality and objectivity of the review content, the present study complements these findings by emphasizing the audience's perspective. Specifically, this study demonstrates how audiences utilize GadgetIn's content to fulfill their informational, entertainment, personal integrative, and social integrative needs, as reflected in their interactions within the YouTube comment section.

5. Conclusions

Based on the analysis of audience comments on GadgetIn's smartphone review content on YouTube, this study demonstrates that GadgetIn's content is able to fulfill various audience needs while providing satisfaction from the perspective of Uses and Gratifications Theory. Audiences actively utilize GadgetIn's content to satisfy specific needs, including cognitive needs, affective needs, personal integrative needs, and social integrative needs through the smartphone review videos presented on the channel.

Cognitive needs emerged as the most dominant category identified in this study. Audiences use GadgetIn's content as a source of information, education, and reference before learning about or purchasing a smartphone product. In addition, the findings reveal the fulfillment of affective needs. Audiences reported feeling entertained by GadgetIn's relaxed, spontaneous, and humorous style of presenting product reviews.

The study also found evidence of personal integrative needs among audiences. GadgetIn's content serves as a reference for decision-making regarding smartphone purchases. After watching the review content, audiences expressed greater confidence in selecting products that match their needs. Furthermore, social integrative needs were identified, as audiences utilized the comment section as a space for interaction, sharing experiences, expressing opinions, and providing recommendations to other users.

Overall, the findings successfully answer the research question by demonstrating that GadgetIn's YouTube content fulfills audience needs while generating audience satisfaction. These findings support the assumptions of Uses and Gratifications Theory, which suggest that audiences are not passive media consumers but active users who consciously select and utilize media content according to their specific needs and motivations.

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