

Representation of Hedonistic Lifestyle in Jeffree Star's Youtube VLOGS: Roland Barthes' Semiotics Analysis

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ABSTRACT : Youtube is a form of social media where users can share contents in the form of audio-visual or video. Youtube is a social media that is in great demand by the public, including the Jeffree Star account, which has many videos of various types and content, one of which is a video blog that promotes the hedonistic lifestyle. This broadcast on Youtube is a new medium that is effective in constructing symbols and meanings of messages described through visualization of images. Hedonism is a notion that embraces pleasure as the best morality, it has an impact on negative attitudes that concern the ethics and morals of a person in society such as the emergence of indifference, individualism and selfishness. In this study, researchers analyzed the representation of Jeffree Star's hedonistic lifestyle on Jeffree Star's YouTube account using a qualitative descriptive research methodology, using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis consisting of denotative, connotative, myth / ideological meanings. The results of the research that have been analyzed show that there are contents that reflect the hedonistic lifestyle which can be seen from the meaning of denotation, connotation and myth. Hedonism is represented by Jeffree Star in the video blog scene showing the characteristics of hedonism which include activities, interests and opinions. For example, such as worldly pleasures, spending time, buying or consuming something excessively, a free lifestyle, always wanting to be recognized and not wanting to be matched by anyone.

KEYWORDS: *Representation, Jeffree Star, Hedonistic Lifestyle, Youtube, Semiotics, Roland Barthes*

I. INTRODUCTION

According to the webpage Gossipgust July 2019, Jeffree Lynn Steininger Jr or famously known as Jeffree Star was born on November 15, 1985, in California, United States (Gossipgust.com, 2019). Jeffree Star routinely uploads videos of make-up tutorial in his Youtube channel. His playful make-up style successfully draws the attention of beauty enthusiasts worldwide, including Indonesia. Jeffree Star's social media platforms have now reached more than 16,4 million subscribers on Youtube and more than 14,9 million followers on his Instagram (Kumparan, 2017). His success has inspired not only people in the US, but also Indonesia. He is widely known as a role model particularly in the beauty community, with many of them created a video on Jeffree Star such as Sacha Stevenson, Tasya Farasya, Suhay Salim, Female Daily Network, and others. In his Youtube account, particularly on his vlog, he often exposes his glamor life. Vlog, or a video blog, is similar to a diary, and it is in the form of video. As implied in the term, the dominant content of vlog is video. (Enterprise, 2008, p. 1).

Vlogs uploaded in Youtube nowadays serve the purpose to promote elements of a certain lifestyle, ranging from clothes to wear, items to use, activities to do, and sites to visit. Jeffree Star's vlogs consequently construct a reality of hedonistic lifestyle as a favorable form of pleasure. It is supported by the definition of 'hedonism' established by the Indonesian dictionary drafting team, stating that hedonism is a lifestyle that views pleasure and enjoyment is the primary goal of lifestyle (Ministry of Education, 2000).

Hedonists' general approach to life is that of you-only-live-once. Therefore, they desire to live in the most pleasant and unrestricted way possible (Dewojati, 2010, p. 16). Consequently, appearance matters most. In support of this lifestyle, media often focuses their portrayal of items worn by a certain individual to represent their lifestyle. This corresponds to Chaney's argument in Susanto's *Potret-Potret Gaya Hidup Metropolis*, stating that mass media is inseparable from lifestyle in everyday life. The higher the social status of an individual, the higher their chance to be trendsetters and public spotlight, that requires them to maintain their public image. Their lifestyle consequently should follow the public image. (Susanto, 2001, p. 19). In this article,

we limit the research within the scope of Jeffree Star's vlogs as his vlogs are rated as Top 10 most popular vlogs among viewers (Socialblade.com, 2019). Prof. Dr. Alo Liliweri, M.S in his book *Komunikasi Serba Ada Serba Makna* stated that the history of communication and communication studies are intertwined with the use of symbols and signs in social life (Liliweri, 2011, p. 2).

The most important elements in a broadcast are image and sound; words and music. The more important semiotics system in a broadcast is the use of iconic signs depicting messages to audience, and each sign would be interpreted differently. In his book, Tinarbuko defined semiotics as the study of signs. Signs convey informations, hence it is communicative. It has the capacity to replace something that is imagined or thought (Tinarbuko, 2008, p. 16). Kurniawan in *Semiologi Roland Barthes* explained that Barthes argued the social life in any form it takes is a system of signs in itself (Kurniawan, 2001, p. 53). Social life is often portrayed in a broadcast. Consequently, symbols implied in the broadcast are the ones transferred into the audience's life. Therefore, intensive research of hedonistic lifestyle is required to understand the denotative, connotative, and myths conveyed in Youtube Vlogs using Roland Barthes's semiotics analysis, as hedonistic lifestyle can be effortlessly adopted into everyday life by society through messages or symbols. Requirement of research on the portrayal of hedonistic lifestyle is due to the perception of hedonistic reality as a favorable form of pleasure, yet hedonistic lifestyle in itself bring negative impacts.

We utilize Barthes' semiotics as we intend to analyze the implied symbols within Jeffree Star's vlogs that may be transferred by audience into their lives. Barthes interpreted symbols with Denotative (signifier), Connotative (signified), and myths, in which these concepts are able to explain the symbols in Jeffree Star's vlogs in our research titled "Representation of Hedonistic Lifestyle in Jeffree Star's Youtube Vlogs: Roland Barthes' Semiotics Analysis."

II. METHODOLOGY

Research methods used in the research is interpretivist qualitative descriptive. The research employs Barthes' semiotics analysis as it is capable to disclose meanings behind the signs. Focus of this research is to observe how the communication of hedonistic lifestyle is represented by Jeffree Star through the portrayal of his own lifestyle. The clips are selected and evaluated to identify the signs in accordance to the characteristics of hedonistic lifestyle, and verified with semiotics analysis. Data analysis technique is employed as follows:

1. Data selection
Selecting videos that best represent hedonistic lifestyle in Jeffree Star's Youtube channel. "Shane Dawson Controls My Life For A Day, My Pink VAULT Closet Tour, Official Jeffree Star DREAM House Tour, Surprising Shane Dawson w. \$15,000 Gucci Makeover, Wearing Walmart For A Day With Shane Dawson and Getting Rid of \$ 1,000,000 of Makeup w. Shane Dawson"
2. Data clarification
Clarifying parts able to be interpreted into Jeffree Star's hedonistic lifestyle
3. Data Analysis
Clarified parts are analyzed with Roland Barthes' semiotics analysis
4. Data interpretation
Interpreting the analysis
5. Conclusion
In the concluding part, we draw the conclusion of how hedonistic lifestyle portrayed in the vlog titled "Shane Dawson Controls My Life for A Day, My Pink VAULT Closet Tour, Official Jeffree Star DREAM House Tour, Surprising Shane Dawson w. \$15,000 Gucci Makeover, Wearing Walmart for A Day with Shane Dawson and Getting Rid of \$ 1,000,000 of Makeup w. Shane Dawson"

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Upon collecting and viewing the clips of Jeffree Star's vlog and compiling secondary data of supporting theories, we obtained the data of elements of hedonistic lifestyle within Jeffree Star's vlogs. The elements are found in the activities, interests, and opinions as parts and characteristics of hedonistic lifestyle within the clips. Hedonism encourages consumptive and individualistic behaviors that prioritize personal interests above others (Dewojati, 2010, pp. 52-110). This is reflected in a clip that records an attempt committed by Jeffree Star to bribe a Walmart security staff.

Hedonists focus on pleasure, enjoyment, and satisfaction with luxurious, glamorous, and extravagant impressions (Dewojati, 2010, pp. 52-110). Jeffree Star's act of purchasing extravagant items is driven by desire, not necessity. The act of desire-driven purchase instead of necessity-driven is intended to fulfill a sense of pleasure, enjoyment, and satisfaction. This behavior reflects a wider social structure they live in.

Another lifestyle encouraged by hedonists is going out (of their homes) and visiting places. (Azizah & Indrawati, 2015). A never-ending dissatisfaction. In the vlog clips, it is shown that Jeffree Star designates extravagant brands as standard of existence, a lifestyle that rejects the state of being outdated and obsolete, driving Jeffree Star to purchase and hoard branded items to the point of excess and waste.

IV. CONCLUSION

Jeffree Star's Youtube vlogs reflect hedonistic lifestyle that are visible in the recorded activities, interests, and opinion, constituting them as connotative, possessing double meaning that is subjective. Explanations are as follows:

1. Activities found in the collected clips are visiting places outside home as well as shopping and collecting branded items.
2. Interests displayed are showing off branded items in order to draw attention. Conclusion is the answer of proposed hypothesis (or title). Conclusion should be based on discovered facts and the implications must be explained to clarify its merits.
3. Opinions shown are reflected in one of the clips where Jeffree Star compared himself to other influencers and expressed that wearing branded items is an indication of his social status among wider society and his own audience. He also expressed his thought that it would be okay for him to violate rules or norms to achieve desired pleasure and satisfaction.

A myth on social compromise or belief is implied. Explanations are as follow:

1. Prioritizing personal interests with no regards of the interests and convenience of others.
2. Act of desire-driven purchase, instead of necessity-driven, to achieve pleasure, enjoyment, and satisfaction, resulting in excess and waste.
3. Habits of going out such as malls or restaurants.
4. Designating brands as standard of existence and power in accordance to the lifestyle that encourages extravagant brands as reflection of the social structure they live in and social status they own to separate them from the others.

Hedonistic lifestyle may hold a negative impact that drives society into adapting consumptive and hedonistic behaviors. Social media such as Youtube contains information and signs that may influence and tempt an individual to follow such lifestyle. This may turn someone to fall into consumerism, chasing material pleasure and placing extravagant items as measurement of happiness, driving less fortunate people into deceptions, and forcing them to engage in unnatural acts and behaviors to achieve such deceptions. Internal cause of hedonistic lifestyle is lack of self-control. Lower self-control may lead to higher chance of committing criminal acts. Higher self-control may lead to higher ability to put off the desire of personal pleasure and satisfaction, thus minimizing hedonistic lifestyle.

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