Research article

Promoting East Java Culinary Practices in Webtoon From the Generation Z Perspective

Athika Dwi Wiji Utami

Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Sidoarjo, Indonesia

ORCID
Athika Dwi Wiji Utami: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0666-0950

Abstract.
The challenge of every industry today, including the culinary industry, is understanding the mindset and consumption patterns of Generation Z. They were born and raised side by side with the internet, social media, and technology. Their mindset and consumption patterns are different from the previous generation, especially in terms of mastery of technology and information. The aim of this study was to examine how Generation Z perceives new media of Webtoon as a medium of culinary promotion in East Java. This was mixed-methods research with an explanatory sequential approach. Data collection techniques included online questionnaires, interviews, and pre- and post-tests with 39 respondents. The results showed that there was a difference in the knowledge of Generation Z about East Java culinary practices after reading Webtoon, but the average difference between the pre- and post-test was low. This finding contradicts the perception that Generation Z favors Webtoon as a medium. The in-depth findings showed that this inconsistency is related to personal preferences in media selection. For Generation Z, although Webtoon is not a priority as a medium for the promotion of East Java culinary practices, Webtoon has three functions: a transmitter of information, disseminator of cultural values, and source of entertainment.

Keywords: Generation Z, traditional food, East Java culinary, Webtoon, comic

Corresponding Author: Athika Dwi Wiji Utami; email: athika.dkv@unusida.ac.id

1. Introduction

Indonesia is currently in a period called the Demographic Bonus, where Indonesia is in a period with the composition of generation Z dominance [1]. The results of the 2020 Population Census from the Badan Pusat Statistik released 27,94% of the composition of Indonesia's population dominated by Generation Z, who was born in 1997 to 2012. They are called digital natives because they were born and raised side by side with the internet, social media, and technology, thus influencing their mindset, values, and view of life indirectly. Since they were young, they have experienced many different things from the previous generation, especially in terms of mastering technology and information. They easily socialize with anyone and do not hesitate to expose their opinion and activities on the internet. They are also easily exposed to information

OPEN ACCESS

and culture through the internet, one of which is culinary culture. Current technological sophistication accommodates generation Z to easily and quickly access various culinary delights in the world through media such as television, radio, YouTube, social media, etc. This certainly affects their consumption patterns, communication patterns, tastes, and preferences for culinary compared to previous generations. Piper Jaffray in her research found the fact that Generation Z prefers to spend their money on culinary than fashion [2]. The viral food and beverage that is currently trending on social media are also one of the triggers for this behavior. This is corroborated by the findings of a survey from the firm McKinsey & Company [3], that generation Z who live in big cities is greatly affected by issues and social conditions around them.

Mass media such as television and radio are commonly referred to as old media, while youtube and social media are new media. However, according to Dominick in the book The Dynamics of Mass Communications [4], the mass media have the same 5 functions, including surveillance, transferring information/interpretation, linkage, transmission of values, and entertainment. The comic industry has also transformed from old media to new media, following technological developments and consumer behavior patterns. From only being able to enjoy it through print media to now being able to enjoy it anytime and anywhere online. Considering that Millennials and Generation Z prefer to use technology and gadgets in their daily lives, online comics are superior in terms of the practicality of how they read and are more economical than having to buy printed comics sold in bookstores [5].

In line with the digitization of comics, the function of comics is also growing. Comics do not only serve as entertainment but can also be a medium for education and promotion. Using comics as a promotional tool makes promotion easier to understand and more able to attract the attention of consumers. Comics can present a story that can be used for promotional purposes that can be applied outside the story or comic panel, or inside the comic story [6]. Online comics are also known as digital comics. Webtoon is the most popular digital comic platform in Indonesia with more than 6 million active Indonesian users, 35 million active users worldwide, and 75% of its readers are in the age range of 20 years or above [7]. Since its release in 2015, the Webtoon has received rave reviews and continues to grow rapidly, especially in the number of comics and genres it offers. Not only offering comics from abroad such as Korea and Japan, but comics by local artists are also present and continue to grow to this day.

By referring to some of the facts above and the theory of mass communication, including the uses and gratifications theory and the theory of Dependency (media effects), the researcher wants to answer the questions "Why do Generation Z use

Webtoon?" and "What is their perspective on Webtoon media, especially in terms of promoting East Java culinary?".

2. Method

This study uses a mixed methods. The mixed methods is a research method that combines two methods between quantitative and qualitative methods to be used together in research activity, to obtain more comprehensive, valid, reliable, and objective data [8]. The approach chosen is a quantitative and qualitative analysis discovery model sequentially (Sequential Explanatory). In the first stage, the quantitative method was carried out and further deepened in the second stage, namely the qualitative method. In this study, the data measured in the first stage were descriptive and comparative. Based on the data that has been obtained, then in the second stage qualitatively the quantitative data is further deepened to better explain and understand the data found in the first stage.

The sampling technique used is simple random sampling. The research population came from 120 students of the Visual Communication Design study program, University Nahdlatul Ulama Sidoarjo. Data collection techniques using online questionnaires and pre and post-tests. The questionnaire uses a Likert scale with three variables, including visual comics in Webtoon, the stories and information in comics, and the online comic packaging and delivery. Samples were taken based on Isaac and Michael's sample determination table with a level of 5% totaling 89 respondents. However, only 39 samples provided data that could be processed. The rest are outside the age range of birth years 1997-2012 or only do a pre-test, so the data cannot be processed further.

The sampling technique in the second stage uses a purposive sampling technique, namely the sampling technique of data sources with certain considerations. The technique of collecting data is through open interviews on 3 selected respondents from the first stage. The results of the interviews were analyzed by organizing the data into categories, breaking it down into units, synthesizing, arranging in patterns, choosing which ones are important and will be studied, and making conclusions so that they are easily understood by themselves and others [9]. In the final stage, the researcher looks for a common thread between the data found in the first and second stages. Both are analyzed and compared to whether they complement and deepen or contradict each other. If it is contradictory, then the credibility test is carried out by extending the observation time, triangulation, negative case analysis, and member check, so that

the final result of this study is the result of research that has been qualitatively tested credible [10].

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1. Findings

In the first stage, the researcher conducted a quantitative pre-experimental design method with a one-group pre-test and post-test design. This experimental method aims to examine two variables, namely the use of Webtoon as the independent variable and the culinary knowledge of East Java in generation Z as the dependent variable. This research design uses two paired samples or one group of subjects without a comparison group, that is, only one group is given a pre-test at the beginning, then given treatment in the form of a Webtoon, and ends with a post-test. The pre-test, treatment, and post-test were given online by using the google form. The subjects sequentially filled out the pre-test, then read the Webtoon comic, and continued with the post-test. There are 10 pretest and post-test questions with multiple choice types. The Webtoon used is titled Jajan Squad with local artist Dito Satrio (https://bit.ly/3BI8m6B). Jajan Squad tells the story of a group of friends who like to make videos about Indonesian culinary street food around them. The selected episodes are 9 East Javanese culinary episodes, including Rawon, Nasi Krawu, Rujak Cingur, Pecel Semanggi, Bakso Malang, Nasi Bebek Madura, Tahu Campur, Pecel Pincuk, and Tahu Petis Episode.

The value of pre-test (0,007) and post-test sig (0,013) > 0,5, so that the data are not normally distributed and will be analyzed by the Wilcoxon test. Based on calculations, the value of sig (0,048) > 0,5 then Ho is rejected, Ha is accepted. This means that there is an effect of using Webtoon on respondents' knowledge, or there is a difference between respondents' knowledge of East Java culinary before and after being given treatment (using Webtoon media) with a pre-test mean of 57 and a post-test average of 62.

The closed Likert-scale questionnaire was also distributed online to 39 respondents are used to describe how the perception of Generation Z is based on 3 variables, including visual comics in Webtoon; the stories and information in comics; and the online comic packaging and delivery. The study showed that the data range of the respondent's birth year is 1997 to 2002, with the largest number in 2002 and 2001. A total of 22 respondents were male and the rest were female. A total of 37 respondents know the Webtoon and only 11 respondents have ever read the Jajan Squad Webtoon. The study

revealed that 35,9% strongly agree that visual comics in Webtoon are interesting; 38,5% strongly agree that the stories and information in comics are interesting and factual; and 43,6% strongly agree that the online comic packaging and delivery are appropriate and user-friendly.

The second stage uses a qualitative approach by interviewing three informants selected from the first stage. The selection of informants was based on respondents with the same pre-test and post-test results (Informant A); the value of the pre-test is greater than the post-test (Informant B); and the post-test value is greater than the pre-test (Informant C). The online semi-structured interviews were conducted by calling and sending a message via WhatsApp. It was conducted for 3 days with a duration of about 2 to 3 hours per day. This method was chosen with the consideration of researching during the COVID-19 pandemic and the approval of informants. Based on the coding, there are 4 categories of selective coding, namely (a) Webtoon media; (b) reading Webtoon; (c) preferences; and (d) perception.

3.2. Discussion

The mixed-methods approach was chosen because the researcher wanted to follow up the data found in the first (quantitative) stage. The researcher feels the need for further research to investigate why high perception results are not matched by significantly increased post-test results. The results of the interviews showed that all of them had a positive impression and were interested in Webtoon as a medium for the promotion of East Java culinary. "*Media promotion through Webtoon is a new way and there are still quite a few for its competitors*" (Informant B, July 16, 2021). "*Comic raises culinary a breakthrough to introduce East Java culinarily*, Gen Z does not yet understand how to make it and the ingredients. And how to *introduce it through online media such as Webtoon*" (Informant C, July 17, 2021). In the development of mass media, brochures, advertisements, photos, and videos are some of the media commonly used as a medium of mass communication, but in the era of technology and the internet, various new media have emerged to provide more effective messages delivery to the target user. The comic is one of the new promotional media that is quite effective because it has images, text, and storylines. Comic strips are an effective choice in carrying out a promotional activity 6.

Generation Z sees Webtoon as suitable as a medium that provides information and disseminates cultural transformation values regarding East Javanese culinary. Webtoon

can have a cognitive effect, which causes them to change in terms of their knowledge and views regarding East Java culinary. "*After reading the Webtoon, my insight increases. I came to know that the rawon black color is from kluwek and the petis material is from the shrimp head. That's what I remember the most until now*" (Informant C, July 17, 2021). In addition, Webtoon can have an affective effect, which causes changes in feelings, emotions, attitudes, or values. "*Enough to add insight. Usually just a name. It could be the reason for visiting the place of origin of the culinary*" (Informant A, July 18, 2021). In its development, comics have become part of popular culture as well as films and music, and have been digitized after the 2000s. Currently, comics are not only limited to children's reading but have spread to all circles according to their respective target segments. Comics are visual sequences and tell stories so that comics can be a good medium of communication to their target audience. Moreover, comics that focus on digital platforms have penetrated their popularity to foreign countries.

Generation Z also sees Webtoon as entertaining them. Generation Z is very familiar with the internet and smartphones, so they prefer activities including entertainment in the internet world. "*I read the Webtoon reading the time of recess the night before*" (Informant B, July 16, 2021). Ease of access and use also makes Webtoon the choice of Generation Z as a medium of entertainment. "*The ease of accessing information via a Webtoon makes it easy. There are visual images that interact with local culinary information inserted*" (Informant A, July 18, 2021).

However, they do not use the Webtoon as the main source of information related to East Java culinary. They prefer other media such as Instagram, TikTok, Youtube, and Google search engine to find out culinary. "*When I look for information about culinary arts, I first look for information through online video media websites (youtube, tiktok, etc.) and then ask people who understand the culinary arts*" (Informant B, July 16, 2021). The same thing was conveyed by informant C, "*I prefer to look on the website, Instagram, and YouTube*" (Informant C, July 17, 2021). This is in line with the results of research on four effective ways to provide information about media literacy in generation Z or digital natives, including videos such as YouTube and Instagram, memes, selebgrams, and billboards [11].

The existence of respondents with a lower post-test score than the pre-test is not due to the Webtoon factor, but other factors, both internal and external respondents. For example, their preferences when looking for information about culinary, tend to social media, youtube, and the Google search engine. "*For now I prefer other media such as websites, YouTube, TikTok. Webtoon as a support only*" (Informant B, July 16, 2021). The varied preference for interesting comics is also another factor. Comics that

catch their attention are seen from the genre, graphics, and trending. Based on the uses and gratification theory, the process of mass communication is an individual who is active, selective, and has certain goals related to media exposure to him, which means that individuals will be active but also selective in receiving information in the mass media. The individual also determines whether what he chooses has achieved his satisfaction or not. Then, the individual also determines whether or not to use the messages contained in the media encounter.

4. Conclusions and Suggestions

The first result shows that there is a difference in the knowledge of Generation Z about East Java culinary after reading Webtoon, but the average difference between pre and post-test is low, only 5 points. This finding contradicts the high perception of Generation Z on Webtoon. A deeper finding point to this inconsistency can be attributed to personal preferences on media selection and comic type. For Generation Z, Webtoon is not a priority as a medium for the promotion of East Java culinary Webtoon. As an East Java culinary promotion media has three functions in mass communication, namely as a transmitter of information, disseminator of cultural values, and entertainer. With this research, it is hoped that it can be used as one of the considerations in designing a promotional media with Indonesian cultural content and target segmentation of Generation Z.

References

[1] Diyan Nur Rakhmah, "Gen Z Dominan, Apa Maknanya bagi Pendidikan Kita?," Februari 04, 2021. https://pskp.kemdikbud.go.id/produk/artikel/detail/3133/gen-z-dominan-apa-maknanya-bagi-pendidikan-kita (accessed Jul. 16, 2021).

[2] Hana Fikriyah, "GEN Z dan Kuliner Kekinian," October 05, 2020. https://www.youngontop.com/gen-z-dan-kuliner-kekinian/ (accessed Jul. 16, 2021).

[3] T. Francis and F. Hoefel, "Generation Z Characteristics and Its Implications For Companies," November 12, 2018. https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/consumer-packaged-goods/our-insights/true-gen-generation-z-and-its-implications-for-companies (accessed Jul. 16, 2021).

[4] E. Ardianto, Komunikasi Massa Suatu Pengantar. Bandung: Simbosa Rekatama Media, 2007.

[5] B. S. Ramadhan and R. Rasuardie, "Kajian Industri Komik Daring Indonesia: Studi Komik Tahilalats," JSRW (Jurnal Seni Rupa Warna, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 2–18, 2020, doi: 10.36806/jsrw.v8i1.80.

[6] G. L. A. Kusuma Putra and G. P. P. A. Yasa, "Komik Sebagai Sarana Komunikasi Promosi dalam Media Sosial," Jurnal Nawala Visual, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 1–8, 2019, doi: 10.35886/nawalavisual.v1i1.1.

[7] A. P. Utami, "Pesatnya Perkembangan Komik Digital di Era Globalisasi," April 3, 2021. https://bitjournal.id/pesatnya-perkembangan-komik-digital-di-era-globalisasi (accessed Jul. 18, 2021).

[8] Sugiyono, Metode Penelitian Kombinasi (Mixed Methods). Bandung: Alfabeta, 2018.

[9] Sugiyono, Metode Penelitian Bisnis. Bandung: Alfabeta, 2010.

[10] Sutrisno Hadi, Metodologi Research I. Yogyakarta: Yayasan Penerbitan Fakultas Psikologi Universitas Gajah Mada, 1986.

[11] R. Rastati, "Media Literasi Bagi Digital Natives: Perspektif Generasi Z Di Jakarta," Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan Kwangsan, vol. 6, no. 1, p. 43, 2018, doi: 10.31800/jurnalkwangsan.v6i1.72.