Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences

www.pjlss.edu.pk

RESEARCH ARTICLE

How Fantasy Formed an Identity: Fantasy Theme Analysis in Blue Archive Indonesia Facebook Community

Violleta Azalea Rayputri [1*], Virienia Puspita[2], Rahmad Rizky[3], I Putu Yana Kusuma[4]

[1,2,3,4]Communication Department, Communication Faculty, Bina Nusantara University, Jakarta, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	One of the ways humans socialize is by playing games. A game can bring together people with the same passion and stories that they could share together. From that, people can form a community. This research focusing on Blue Archive Indonesia Community. A Facebook based community which is a home of Indonesian Blue Archive players with more than 130 thousand members. With so many members, drama and events are very likely to happen and can lead to fantasies. Fantasy allows for greater creativity, emotional resonance, and engagement. It can be used to simplify complex ideas, inspire action, or simply entertain while delivering a message. This research wants to explore how fantasies could be the way of groups understanding symbolic realities through communication. Also how fantasy can play an important role in a group's identity formation process. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the method of fantasy theme analysis, observation, and interviews on Facebook Blue Archive Indonesia Community. Fantasy theme analysis reveals how stories formed group identity, influence behavior, and motivate collective action. The fantasy theme analysis method is analyzed based on Bormann's Symbolic Convergence theory. Meanwhile, the focus of this research is the themes that appear in each member's post, the interaction between members, and the language that develops in the community.

INTRODUCTION

Playing games is a way to socialize, both in-game and outside. In today's digital age, players can establish social relationships with other players in online media. In an online gaming environment, players not only connect through the gaming platform, but also through social media such as Facebook, where people can build a community (Gandolfi, E., Ferdig, R.E., Wang, J. 2023). Through community, players can gain an understanding of cultural norms and how to respond, imitate, or reject the culture (Branger, 2023). The culture formed in each individual is different, so the way people react to each activity in the community is also different.

Social media makes it easy for players to create and share ideas, images and videos in virtual communities and networks, where they can interact and share with each other (Kannen, 2023). One of the social media that is easy to create a community is Facebook. Facebook has a feature called "Page", which allows businesses, brands, organizations, or public figures to connect with their fans or consumers. In contrast to personal profiles, Facebook Pages are designed to further enhance public promotion and interaction. Pages provide features to communicate with followers through comments, direct messages, and sharing posts on the homepage. This can help to build and maintain relationships with audiences. In addition, Facebook Pages can be used to create communities, including gaming communities.

This research takes a community called Blue Archive Indonesia Community. An Indonesian online game group based on an online Gacha RPG game called Blue Archive. Gacha RPGs are one category of games that offer a complex user experience. According to Chen (2015), the advantages of Gacha RPGs lie in their engaging stories and characters, as well as game systems that allow players to experience that tests their luck. The growing popularity of Gacha RPGs is proof that the development of digital

technology has brought about major changes in social life (Woods, 2023). According to Statista, the total revenue in the Role-Playing Games market is projected to reach US$44.95 billion by 2022. This is predicted to continue to increase by 7.91% and result in a projected market volume of US$70.73 billion by 2027 (Statista, n.d.).

Each member of the community interacts by sharing stories and fantasies that can develop along with interconnected fantasy patterns. Fantasies create group consciousness by presenting emotions, motives, and meanings that are implicit in the form of socially shared narratives (Bormann, 1985). Blue Archive Indonesia can allow members to create their own virtual body, choose the different characteristics of their avatar, and/or completely abandon their self-identity (Zhang, 2024). This kind of freedom only exists in virtual worlds and helps build relationships that are not possible offline. Just like other online gaming communities, Blue Archive Indonesia has its own cultures, rules, and communication style within the community. People who are members of the community have a way of sharing their likes, mindsets, ways of playing games, including sharing their fantasies. Community members often have unique ways of seeing events and understanding emotions. This process is called the fantasy process that members usually show when they fantasize and design scenarios according to what they believe. (Bormann, 1985).

The Blue Archive Indonesia community is an open community where anyone can easily find and join this community. This makes the Blue Archive Indonesia community consist of many characters who have their own fantasies. Speaking of the community, Blue Archive Indonesia is one of the online gaming communities on Facebook that has continuous interaction between members. Making it form fantasy themes and fantasy chains between members. The formation of a fantasy chain is when someone agrees with that person's fantasy and the next person continues their fantasy (Puspita, 2017). People who have similar interests tend to share fantasies more easily and form fantasy chains. Members will use these fantasies to improve their in-game skills, to expand their connections and interpersonal communication. The stories, narratives and fantasies that develop will form a group identity. Identity is one of the ways in which a community publicly identifies itself, as well as an aspect of how people see the community (Koteyko, 2015). Therefore, this research wants to examine how far fantasy themes can shape group identity. How the community is perceived and how it differentiates itself from other communities.

With 135.000 members and its popularity, the Blue Archive Indonesia community is an ideal place to analyze fantasy themes and fantasy chains among community members. This research uses fantasy theme analysis contained in Bormann's Symbolic Convergence theory (1985). In this study, what the researcher will do are:

1. Identifying fantasy themes or stories that are often repeated and become part of the narrative of the online gaming community "Blue Archive".

 2. Identifying the fantasy chain, fantasy type, and rhetorical fantasy that appear in the narratives of the "Blue Archive" online gaming community.

3. Analyze how the stories that appear in the narratives of the "Blue Archive" online gaming community shape community members' perceptions of themselves and others, also how community members describe themselves, their values and identities.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative research method with fantasy theme analysis that was developed by communication expert Ernest G. Bormann. Fantasy Theme Analysis is part of a broader theory known as Symbolic Convergence Theory (Bormann, 1985). This method focuses on understanding how groups create shared meaning through fantasy. Fantasy is an imaginative interpretation of an event where a group of people can create alternatives to other viewpoints of a particular event. (Bormann, 1985). In this study, Fantasy Theme analysis is used as a method to understand how narratives and stories shared in online communities help shape group identity and culture.

Fantasy themes help group members to make sense of their experiences and build a sense of community (Adams, 2013). Most good critical methods provide a clear scheme for analyzing rhetorical material. This research uses the Fantasy Theme Analysis (FTA) method as an application

of SCT of what will be identified are fantasy chains, fantasy themes, and fantasy types in the Blue Archive Indonesia community. Researchers will use several steps to analyze the themes, such as:

Step 1:

Selection of the research object

In this study, we analyzed posts on the Blue Archive Indonesia Facebook community. The researcher took the Facebook posts and conversations from the last 3 months.

Step 2**:**

Data collection

In this study, data was obtained from several sources, namely observation of members'posts on Facebook based on categories, conducting interviews with admins and several members to obtain members' views on the symbolic meanings and narratives they share.

Step 3**:**

Identify fantasy themes

In this study, the researcher identified fantasy themes in the group by identifying fantasy theme units from the collected data. The fantasy themes were:

- Fantasy Characters: The person or entity involved in the narrative (in this case sensei and his students).

- Fantasy Actions: Events or activities that are narrated (e.g. waifu posts or theories about in-game stories).

- Fantasy Setting: The setting in which the story takes place (e.g. the world of Kivotos where the Blue Archive is located).

Step 5:

 Symbolic analysis.

 After identifying the fantasy theme, the researcher analyses the symbols that the group uses to create shared meaning. This analysis involves:

- Chaining Out: Observing how fantasy themes developed into fantasy chains and fantasy types.

- Rhetorical Vision: Analyzing how individual fantasy themes form a rhetorical vision that connects group members through shared values, beliefs and goals.

Step 6:

Interpretation and Generalization

Once the data was all collected, the researcher interpreted the data to understand the fantasy themes and symbolic convergence within the group. generalization is done by linking the results of the analysis to theory or the broader context of communication.

Step 7**:**

Reporting the research results

The researcher compiled a report based on the findings. The report includes a description of the fantasy themes, symbolic analyses, and implications for communication theory and practice. The results can be used to understand group dynamics, develop communication strategies, or manage organizations.

Data collection techniques

a. Observation

This research uses observation techniques based on symbolic convergence, namely fantasy theme analysis. The purpose of this theory is to explain how group members develop shared meaning through the narratives, stories, or fantasies they share. Through this process, group members

discover a shared identity and a collective understanding of reality. In addition, SCT can help understand how group identity is formed and maintained. Stories and fantasies shared in group communication help create a shared identity that strengthens group cohesion.

The observation conducted in this research is participant observation. This observation is usually inductive and is conducted as part of the exploratory phase of research with the aim of forming hypotheses from the data. It is often associated with the grounded theory method, which allows the researcher to revisit the research topic with more knowledge. Its ability to provide deep description and help understand human behavior is the strength of participant observation.

b. Interview

Secondary data that will be used in this research is interviews. The interview subjects are moderators or admins of the Blue Archive community who are actively involved in the community. To see whether they are active or not, it can be seen from the badge under their username. Active community members will be labeled 'top contributors' by Facebook. Interviews allow for a genuine and meaningful exchange of views on the meaning of life.

The type of interview used in this research is an unstructured interview. Unstructured interviews flow more like a normal conversation than a formal meeting between the researcher and the informant because they do not follow a set of questions even though the researcher focuses on a particular event or practice (De Fina, 2019). Unstructured interviews are used by researchers to understand linguistic categories and practices and as a tool to immerse themselves in the culture and way of thinking of a group of people being studied. Fontana and Frey (1994) add types of unstructured interviews such as gender-based interviews and post-structuralist interviews.

Interviews are essential for triangulation, which is a technique used in ethnography that compares results and insights from different methods of data collection and interpretation (De Fina, 2019). Interviewees are asked to comment and give their interpretations about specific episodes or fragments of talk or other units of communication that have been selected by the researcher, or explain behaviors observed by themselves or other participants. However, interviews are also used to gather background information on various aspects of group members' lives, beliefs, and habits that can shed light on linguistic and communicative practices.

Figure 1: Fantasy theme analysis based on Bormann (1977)

The chart above explains that fantasy themes are interconnected with each other. Bormann asserts that communities are formed and maintained by the stories they share (Adams, 2013). In this theory, people are storytellers and share dramatizations of events. They make sense of something complex by creating a script or narrative to explain what happened (Sovacool and Ramana 2015). The Fantasy theme analysis works to reveal in depth how fantasies in group communication can make people trust others, and through that trust, the community can form a foundation for decision-making and idea generation. The SCT framework describes the elements of group process, to illustrate how group members with different backgrounds can come together in their own group narrative.

This study adopts a constructivist paradigm, which emphasizes that reality is shaped by the subjective perceptions and interpretations of individuals or groups (Creswell, 2019). In line with this paradigm, an interpretive qualitative approach is employed to understand the meanings attributed to the phenomena under investigation (Aberdeen & Yin, 2013), (Morse, 1991).

The research method utilized is an embedded multi-case study, focusing on five veterinary clinics that are specializing in small animals: Gustavet in South Jakarta, Puri Vet in West Jakarta, Praktek Drh. Magda Rumawas in North Jakarta, Sunshine Pet Vet in Yogyakarta, and SASH Praktek Dokter Hewan in Tangerang Regency. These clinics have been selected due to their prominence and specialization within their respective regions. The study subjects consist of individuals with expertise, experience, and knowledge related to the use of artificial intelligence in veterinary clinic marketing communications (Creswell, 2019).

Data collection is conducted through structured interviews with carefully selected informants. These interviews utilize focused and structured questions designed to obtain comprehensive views from the informants. This is to facilitate a deep understanding of how artificial intelligence is being implemented within the marketing communications of veterinary clinics.

Data analysis is carried out through a systematic process involving data reduction, data display, and data interpretation. The interview data are carefully simplified, organized, and analyzed to identify emerging patterns and meanings related to the implementation of artificial intelligence in veterinary clinic marketing communications. Particular attention is given to the nuances in the responses, with the aim of drawing out the complexities and contradictions that may arise(Ritzer & Guba, 1991).

RESULTS

Blue Archive Indonesia Community Profile

Blue Archive Indonesia Community is a community for Blue Archive game fans in Indonesia and wants to add friends who have the same hobby. Blue Archive is a mobile Gacha RPG game from NAT Games with JP publisher from Yostar and Nexon KR publisher for global. In this game players will become 'sensei' or teachers leading students to face various incidents in the city of Kivotos, a fictional city in this game. According to Blue Archive's official website, the story in the game revolves around 'Schale,' a school organisation responsible for governing the city of Kivotos (Nexon, n.d). The conflict begins when the leader of Schale disappears which causes Kivotos to become chaotic as many schools are at war with each other. The schools in Kivotos are divided into districts with certain specialisations, such as Millennium Science School specialising in knowledge, Trinity General School specialising in elegance, and Gehenna Academy specialising in bravery. The characters in Blue Archive is 99% female which makes this game targeted to male gamers.

The Blue Archive Indonesia Facebook community has 130.000 members - as of November 2024 with 20 admins and moderators. One of the reasons why this community is growing so fast is because this community is open, where anyone can search and enter this community freely. Members who are active and less active can be distinguished by the label listed under their username. The activities in this community are quite diverse such as daily posts, gacha showing off threads, sharing memes/fanarts, to large-scale events such as community member gatherings.

Each member must comply with the rules made by community admin. These rules are made to maintain order and harmony in the community. Any member who does not abide by the rules will be sanctioned, expelled and the worst is blacklisted from all gaming communities on Facebook. All members are free to post what they want to post such as asking about game tips and tricks, posting memes, and character fanart. The rules regarding posting are written in the community's 'About us'. Fellow community members are required to respect each other, prohibited from using harsh words, and prohibited from posting things that can trigger arguments such as racism.

Pedophilia labelling that envelops the community

Labels are seen as social actions that can influence members to act and build communication within the community (Dinhopl, 2015). The Blue Archive Indonesia is one of the communities that are labelled by fellow gamers and other social media users. The labels given to this community are very negative, namely the pedophile community and the community that likes small children.

This label is related to the game characters design, which most of them are small girl. The characters in the Blue Archive game are described as schoolgirls with an age range of 14-18 years, which makes them fall into the category of minors. Not only the characters are minors, the choice of clothing and scenes in the game are often explicitly described, such as Eimi who dresses very revealingly and has

large breasts also Hanako who has a lewd nature. While not everyone sees all of Blue Archive's characters, they play an important role in shaping the community label.

Despite the negative label, people still want to join the community, and members also refuse to leave because the issue of pedophilia has nothing to do with gaming. The community considers childlike characters in games to be commonplace and that this has been used in many works of art such as anime in games. In previous research conducted by Megan Sluzhevsky, child characters or loli have existed since the Edo period in Japan from 1603 to 1867. At that time many artworks featuring young people, especially women under the age of 18, were considered objects of sexual desire for older men. These artworks were sexually explicit, clearly displaying visuals of genitals and active sexual intercourse. (Sluzhevsky, 2022).

Based on interviews with members and admin of the community, members of Blue Archive Indonesia consider themselves as 'lolicon' not pedophiles. Lolicon is the personality of someone who likes fictional characters shaped like children (loli) with cute and adorable character designs (Kilduff, 2023). Lolicon is often associated with pedophilia because they both like child-shaped characters. However, lolicon refuses to be called a pedophile because it is different. Lolicon is only interested in fictional characters, not children in the real world (Sluzhevsky, 2022). Furthermore, in a study conducted by Galbraith (2020), fictional characters depicted as children do not fall under the sexualisation of children because it is only the production of imagination (Stibbard, 2024).

"It's undeniable that the BA community is labelled as pedo by people, but I don't think that makes sense, even though there are characters like Hanako, Asuna, Karin who are adults but it's as if they don't exist, people only focus on the child characters." Said 'person' (not the real name) as community admin.

According to one member, one of the reasons why the Blue Archive community has been labelled a pedophile is the excessive number of posts fantasizing about the game's female characters. The posts went viral and spread outside the community.

"People are too overly concerned about their waifus and things like that make outsiders think that the BA community is full of pedophiles." Said Nana Agus Ariansa as member. He also adds "but so far the members are fine, no one is a pedo even though there is a lot of vulgar content, but that's it."

Fantasy Theme Analysis of Blue Archive Indonesia Community

Fantasy themes from a community can be found in the rhetoric or daily conversations in the community. This rhetorical message can be classified into three, namely settings, character, and action (Bormann, 1985).

- Settings: The setting is the place where the community is located. The Blue Archive Indonesia community is set online, namely on Facebook. Facebook is now Meta known as a 'friendship' based platform (Pérez-Sabater, 2019). It is this basis that eventually made Facebook give birth to community pages so that it became a strong social media community base.

- Character: Characters are the people in the community. In this case, members of the Blue Archive Indonesia community. On the Facebook Page, members will be labeled based on their activeness. Activity is assessed by how often they make posts, and comment on other people's posts. The labels include Rising Contributor, Top Contributor, and All-star Contributor. The more active a member is, the more points they will earn to level up.

- Action: Action is an action or event that happens in the community that triggers the fantasy. These events are displayed in posts on the Facebook page.

Every game sometimes has its own language or terms that only players can understand, including Blue Archive Indonesia. The use of language created in the Blue Archive Indonesia community is displayed in each Facebook post. Posts contained in the Blue Archive Indonesia community are categorized into 3, namely daily posts, gacha show-off posts, and meme/fanart posts. Daily posts are posts that can be made by all members to moderators. The contents of this post vary, such as tips and guides for playing the Blue Archive game, info about the Blue Archive game and others. Show off gacha posts are created by admins and moderators to facilitate community members who want to 'show off' their gacha.

In these gacha show-off posts, Blue Archive members often communicate using gaming language. Some examples of gaming language that researchers found in the community are:

- Pull: Pull literally means to pull in English. But in Blue Archive games "pull" refers to the act of using in-game currency or special tickets to obtain random characters, items, or cards. This mechanic is similar to a lottery or raffle system, where players hope to obtain rare items or characters.

- Banners: Banners when interpreted are informational messages such as pamphlets. But in Blue Archive, Banners are special events held by game developers where players get the chance to get certain characters or items to upgrade skills and increase levels.

- Pyrox: Pyrox is the in-game currency of Blue Archive. This currency can be used for transactions in the game such as buying skins, weapons, and food.

- Spark/Spark Renge: Spark refers to the pity system, where players usually don't manage to get the desired character or item), from the developer implementing this system so that players are guaranteed to get the character or item they want even if it's only 1 item.

The fantasy theme of the Blue Archive Indonesia community is divided into 3: women, theory, and inside jokes.

Category 1: Women

The gaming industry frequently includes female characters in games, particularly those aimed at male players (Lynch, 2024). However, these female characters often do not reflect real-world women, particularly in terms of body proportions. Many female characters are portrayed as overly sexy or vulgar to attract male players (Lynch, 2024). Research shows that a significant number of female characters in video games are rated as mature, depicted with cleavage, and wearing revealing clothing (Morawitz, 2009). Beasley and Standley (2002) found that 70% of female characters in video games were rated as mature, 46% were depicted with cleavage, and 86% of female characters were depicted wearing low-neck or revealing clothing. In addition, females were shown twice as much as males. A female character in a game can be categorised as sexy even if she is wearing closed clothing. Sexy can be shown by her character being cute, shy, or seductive (Valentowitsch, 2024).

Blue Archive is an anime-style game that primarily appeals to players interested in moe characters, which are designed to be cute and attractive. The game has a high proportion of female characters, with only 1% of the characters being male. As a result, most players and the game's community are male. Players develop emotional connections with their favourite characters, often referred to as "waifu" or "wife". This emotional closeness is known as parasociality, where users perceive fictional characters as real and form strong bonds with them (Alavala, 2024). Some researchers suggest that this phenomenon may provide a means of interaction for lonely individuals. Blue Archive further emphasizes this emotional connection by allowing players to interact with their favorite characters through in-game features such as Momo Talk. However, this heightened emotional bond can also lead to fantasies and sexual thoughts towards the characters, as expressed by some players in online discussions.

A member named Ardian Wahyu del Castillo recently posted a picture of a character named Iochi Mari, who is a nun from Trinity General School. In one of the fanart, Mari is seen in a new dress that reveals more skin than her usual nun attire. He wrote this caption 'Alamakter@ngs@ngsaat di panggung😍' means she's aroused on a stage. This caption replied by <u>Aburizal Firmansyah</u>, he said 'apa ini? (what is this?)🙈🙈🙈🙈🙈🙈🙈 Plap plap plap 1.000.000x, Get Pregnant!!!' and then replied again by <u>Andika</u> by saying 'terlalu beda dengan yg di gereja 🙈🙈Ketek wangy wangy 😊😊' means too different from her church version, this version has good armpits.

Figure 2. Iochi Mari

Although there is no evidence in the picture indicating arousal, Ardian's caption sparked fantasies among fans who began to sexualize Mari's character. The comment on the post create a fantasy chain where many people want to have sexual intercourse with Mari.Female fantasy themes, including sexual ones, are common in the community. Research by Karaian (2024) suggests that men tend to have a broader range of fantasies, including more explicit and visual ones, while women often create more emotional and romantic images in their fantasies. This includes fantasies involving fictional or unreal scenarios.

This fantasy theme led to a chain of fantasies by other members where they agreed that Mari's character was seductive and this kind of topic was discussed again in other posts so that it could become a type of community fantasy.

The next character that is popular among fans is Ibuki. Ibuki has a small body and carries a teddy bear making her look like a kindergartner. In the game she is 11 years old which makes her an underage character. Even so, many members like her and make Ibuki their waifu/wife.

Figure 3. Ibuki

In a post written by Diego Aldrian, he stated the reasons why he liked Ibuki and made her his wife. He wrote "961 reason why I love Ibuki" underneath he attached a photo with 961 reasons why he likes ibuki such as she is cute, she is adorable etc. This creates fantasy chain with with fellow ibuki fans like user hayhayhay who wrote "2 words: still tight" or Suhendri who wrote "pengen banget punya anak kek Ibuki, tiap pulang kerja pasti mati bahagia ngeliat tingkahnya." Means 'I want to have a child like Ibuki, i would be die happily because of how she acts' Many people find this controversial because Ibuki is a a toddler and it is illegal to make her a waifu, but some people don't mind it because they think Ibuki is just a fictional character.

Category 2: Theory

Humans are natural storytellers who enjoy sharing experiences and creating fantasies (Bormann, 1985). The Blue Archive game offers an intriguing story set in a fictional academy world, filled with humour, drama, and mystery. As the player, or sensei, it is responsibility to guide students, complete missions, resolve conflicts, and uncover the mysteries surrounding Kivotos. The game's storyline has led many players to develop theories, ranging from speculations about upcoming game developments to conspiracy theories. The American Psychological Association (APA) has found that

people engage in theorizing and creating theories as a way to satisfy their motivations and to understand and find safety in their surroundings. Additionally, they often have a belief in the superiority of the community they identify with (Bowes, 2023). In the Blue Archive game, various conspiracy theories emerge, spanning topics such as the game's storyline, characters, their relationships, and even the connection between sensei and characters.

One of this fantasy themes is seen in the post of an account named Vanz. He fantasizing about "Are there any male students in Kivotos? Note: M = Male, F = Female". In the Blue Archive anime, the only one known to be male is the sensei (teacher). Whereas in the game, the sensei's gender depends on the player's perception, it can be female/male. In this image, Vanz creates a Fantasy Theme of whether there is a male student among 99% female students, which he expresses through a scene in the animation. This creates a fantasy chain between the other members.

Account named Derby Romero Kanaren's fantasizes that there are male students in Kivotos (Blue Archive world) that he can make friends with "I mean there are two genders M and F so there is a possibility that there are men in Kivotos. I hope there are male students who even like hanging out with me. All girls character are so boring" Derby Romero's account creates fantasy chain with Muhammad Rudi Setiawan's account who fantasized that if there were indeed male students in Blue Archive, it would make the game's popularity even higher because there would be more women were playing. He fantasizes that "The money will flow fast if the boy is handsome, so many women will play".

This fantasy creates chain with Kristianto Bintang's account who thought there must be male students in the Blue Archive game but it was shown implicitly "there is (man) but the developer doesn't show it pretty well. Just imagine why there is a boy lavatory in the Bounty Classroom stage. Then students who are 100 original humans whose fathers must be male. Plus, there is an event where a child is looking for his father (there is a possibility that the father is human because no spirit is shown)". From the theory presented by Derby Romero's account, a fantasy type of the word "male" emerged. After Derby Romero, many accounts theorized about men in the Blue Archive game world because 99% of the Blue Archive characters are female. Many fantasized and had their own theories.

The development of this fantasy is due to the human brain that continues to develop, likes to dream, and imagine different worlds (Gomel, 2023). In addition, dissatisfaction with a theory can also cause a person to imagine other theories or fantasies. The Fantasy Chain in this fantasy theme can be seen from how much members understand the story of the Blue Archive game. People who really understand the story of the Blue Archive will respond to author posts by explaining their arguments or explaining the theory according to their own version. However, if there are members who are less interested in the Blue Archive story and only focus on the game, they will reply with a simple answer. The fantasy chains that exist within the group can connect members, build an identity, and strengthen relationships between members (Gomel, 2023).

Category 3: Inside Jokes

Jokes can be used to build a community (Wilk & Gimbel, 2024). These jokes arise from experiences, events, and even culture within the community. Blue Archive Indonesia is a community known for its inside jokes and memes. These jokes, specific to the community, help build solidarity and create a sense of belonging among its members. Inside jokes in Blue Archive Indonesia often stem from the traits and characteristics of the game's characters, as well as popular phrases used within the community or on Facebook. The way to analyze inside jokes is by taking words that often appearing the community.

Such as:

'ah normal ini mah': Meaning a joke that is usually used to respond to vulgar posts
'cunny': Short for cute and funny. Usually mentioned by members when they see Blue Archive's character posts that are cute and adorable like a child.
'berotakaru': Dongo-brained (stupid). Aru is a Blue Archive character who has an innocent nature so that many characters are tricked by other characters. Therefore, community members make these words as jokes/mockery both in posts and comments.
'pacicil': Short for pacar cina kecil or little Chinese girlfriend. Used to label Blue Archive characters from Shanhaijing school which is in China.

Blue Archive has a vibrant meme ecosystem where fans develop and share memes based on the game's characters and storylines. One prominent meme revolves around Abydos Academy, which is often the subject of jokes about being underfunded and on the brink of closure. These memes portray Abydos students struggling to raise money, often using humor to depict their challenging lives. The Dryer Squad, a group of popular characters, is also a meme-worthy topic due to the high pyrox required to obtain them and their portrayal as dominant women. Additionally, there are well-known inside jokes, such as the racist twins Momoi and Midori, who are infamous for mocking black characters. Furthermore, the Blue Archive community has created numerous nicknames for the game's characters, reflecting their personalities and popular culture in social media. These inside jokes play a vital role in building social connections, strengthening group identity, and fostering a sense of community within the Blue Archive fandom.

Rhetorical Vision as ways to identify an Identity

The rhetorical vision of the Blue Archive Indonesia community encompasses the unique ways the community expresses its identity, values and sense of belonging through language, humor and distinctive cultural references (Bormann, 1985). By blending game elements and local culture, the community has a strong rhetorical vision for building relationships between players and the game, as well as between players within the community. Here are some key aspects of the rhetorical vision of the Blue Archive Indonesia community:

- Sensei as Member Identity:

In the Blue Archive Indonesia community, players position themselves as 'Sensei,' or teachers to the in-game characters. The term 'Sensei' becomes more than just a role in the game, but also a nickname between players or in community interactions also strengthens togetherness, creating a familiar and supportive atmosphere.

- Local Culture-Based Humor:

The community often adapts memes or jokes from the Blue Archive with a touch of local culture. For example, Karin and Asuna wear kebaya, Arisu sings in Javanese. The players often use colloquialisms or even local terms to enrich this humor, which creates a sense of familiarity among them and strengthens community ties.

- Mutual respect and empathy within the community:

The community often exhibits close bonds and mutual support, where players share game strategies, gacha tips, and exciting moments with their favorite characters. This shows a vision of togetherness and solidarity, where they are not just playing for themselves, but also helping each other achieve goals or overcome difficulties.

- A hilarious narrative about gacha and luck:

The Blue Archive Indonesia community has a gacha show-off post that shows a typical narrative about 'Sensei's patience' when participating in gacha events. Narratives or stories about the difficulty of obtaining favorite characters through gacha are often peppered with humor, showing a rhetorical vision that includes struggle and persistence as comforting elements among players. This strengthens the sense of camaraderie and unyielding spirit among players, even when having to repeat the gacha.

- Affection for Favorite Characters:

In this community, favorite characters are often treated very specially, and are even protected or defended if anything negative is associated with them. Players often show affection or pride for certain characters through fanart, discussions, or theories on the homepage. This protection of characters shows a vision where players feel emotionally connected, and often consider characters as 'wives' or 'foster children' in the game world.

- Creativity in Creating Memes and Content:

The creativity of the Blue Archive Indonesia community is seen in how they create memes and content related to the game, with both local and international references. This vision shows how the community embraces aspects of humour and popular culture, while still maintaining local characteristics. This creative content is not only entertainment, but also a means of expressing pride in local culture.

- Solidarity in Supporting and Welcoming New Players:

Many community members actively help or guide new players to understand the game mechanics or enjoy the story. This vision shows how important mutual support and solidarity among players is, creating an inclusive and fun community. Through this rhetorical vision, the Blue Archive Indonesia community demonstrates a family spirit, and maintains its values well.

DISCUSSION

The Blue Archive Indonesia community has become a thriving and innovative online gaming community, where members not only enjoy the gameplay but also form strong relationships with each other through social media. With over 130 thousand members on the Blue Archive Indonesia Facebook page, fans of the game can connect with fellow enthusiasts and engage in various activities such as sharing their in-game achievements, chatting, and participating in community gatherings. This community's growth can be attributed to the values of caring, competitiveness, respect, and tolerance that are encouraged among its members.

Research on this community has shown that symbolic convergence plays a significant role in creating collective meaning and a strong identity. Members identify themselves as 'Sensei' and develop emotional bonds with the game's characters as well as with other players. Humor and memes are used as expressive symbols to communicate shared struggles, solidarity, and loyalty. Despite concerns about issues such as pedophilia in the community, members maintain a strong sense of identity and do not let these concerns overshadow their experiences.

By propagating stories, jokes, and narratives, the community creates a rhetorical vision where members feel like part of a larger family, paving the way for a strong community identity. Overall, the research suggests that symbolic convergence strengthens the identity and togetherness of the Blue Archive Indonesia community, fostering bonds both in-game and online through shared values and symbols. The Blue Archive Indonesia group regularly shares and engages in fantasy themes that are inspired by the Blue Archive games. These themes include memes, fanart, and cosplay of the game's characters.

By participating in these fantasy themes, group members can interpret their interactions and establish a virtual identity within the group. Sharing these fantasy themes plays a crucial role in maintaining and fostering empathic communication among the group. The ultimate objective is to enhance the group's commitment to using symbolic cues to empathize and differentiate themselves from other groups. This is achieved by aligning the thoughts, words, and actions of the group members through the shared interpretation of their experiences using symbolic cues. The group's communication patterns are characterized by openness and intimacy, which contributes to the formation of rhetorical characteristics. By sharing their fantasies, the group aims to foster a sense of togetherness and accomplish common goals, thus influencing their attitudes and ways of life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

REFERENCES

Adams, A. S. (2013). Needs met through role-playing games: A fantasy theme analysis of Dungeons & Dragons. Kaleidoscope: A Graduate Journal of Qualitative Communication Research, 12(6), 69-86.

Alavala, V. (2024).Friends in Fiction: Bonding with Fictional Characters Introduced Through Fictional Narrative Positively Affects and Interplays with the Psychology and Social Behaviors of Adults to Influence Engagement. 1-10. https://doi.org/10.25886/0zfc-da38

Behm-Morawitz, E., & Mastro, D. (2009). The Effects of the Sexualization of Female Video Game Characters on Gender Stereotyping and Female Self-Concept. Sex Roles, 61(11-12), 808–823. doi:10.1007/s11199-009-9683-8

Blanco, B.M. (2023) Instagramers Z: virtual bildung, reading identities and critical literacy in Lola Vendetta by Raquel Riba Rossy [Article@Instagramers Z: bildung virtual, identidadeslectoras y literacidadcríticaen Lola Vendetta de Raquel Riba Rossy]. Cultura, Lenguaje y Representacion, 32, pp. 131-146.

Bormann, E. G. (1985). Symbolic Convergence Theory: A Communication Formulation. Journal of Communication, 35(4), 128–138. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.1985.tb02977.x

Branger, L.A.G. (2023). Mediated Identities: How Facebook Intervenes in the Virtual Manifestation of Our Identities. Virtual Identities and Digital Culture, pp. 38-47.

Carmen Pérez-Sabater, Ginette Maguelouk Moffo. (2019). Managing identity in football communities on Facebook: Language preference and language mixing strategies. Lingua, Volume 225, Pages 32-49. ISSN 0024-3841. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2019.04.003.

De Fina, A. (2019). The ethnographic interview. The Routledge handbook of linguistic ethnography, 154-167.

Dinhopl, Anja &Gretzel, Ulrike & Whelan, Andrew. (2015). Labeling as a Social Practice in Online Consumption Communities. Psychology & Marketing. 32. 10.1002/mar.20777.

Gomel, E., & Gurevitch, D. (2023). What is fantasy and who decides? In Springer eBooks (pp. 3–13). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-26397-2_1

Jensen Schau, Hope; Gilly, Mary C. (2003). We Are What We Post? Self-Presentation in Personal Web Space. Journal of Consumer Research, 30(3), 385–404. doi:10.1086/

Jordán-Conde, Zayira; Mennecke, Brian; Townsend, Anthony (2014). Late adolescent identity definition and intimate disclosure on Facebook. Computers in Human Behavior, 33(), 356–366. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2013.07.015

Kannen, V., & Langille, A. (Eds.). (2023). Virtual Identities and Digital Culture (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003310730

Karaian, L. (2022). Plastic fantastic: Sex robots and/as sexual fantasy. Sexualities, 27(3), 633–652. https://doi.org/10.1177/13634607221106667

Koteyko, Nelya; Hunt, Daniel (2015). Performing health identities on social media: An online observation of Facebook profiles. Discourse, Context & Media, (), S2211695815000616–. doi:10.1016/j.dcm.2015.11.003

Kozinets, R. V., &Gretzel, U. (2023). Netnography evolved: New contexts, scope, procedures and sensibilities. Annals of Tourism Research, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2023.103693

Lynch, T., Tompkins, J. E., Gilbert, M., & Burridge, S. (2024). Evidence of Ambivalent Sexism in Female Video Game Character Designs. Mass Communication and Society, 27(6), 1529–1554. https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2024.2311229

Meriläinen, M. (2022). Young people's engagement with digital gaming cultures – Validating and developing the digital gaming relationship theory. Entertainment Computing, 44, 100538. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.entcom.2022.100538

Nexon. (2024, October 2024). Blue Archive Official Website. https://bluearchive.nexon.com/home#a

Osisanwo, A. & Falade, T. (2024). Directives and references in selected coronavirus-motivated internet memes. Language and Semiotic Studies, 10(2), 245-266. https://doi.org/10.1515/lass-2024-0008

Puspita, Virienia. "Fantasy Themes of Marine Retiree Group." Humaniora Binus, vol. 8, no. 2, 2017, pp. 113-120.

Sluzhevsky, Megan, "The Costs of Lolicon: Japan's Pedophilia Trade" (2022). Senior Theses. 96. https://research.library.fordham.edu/international_senior/96

Stibbard, N. K. (2024). Sexual Infantilization: The Peril in Consuming Little Girl Imagery (Doctoral dissertation, San Francisco State University).

S. Zhang, H. Jiang and J. M. Carroll. (2011). "Integrating online and offline community through facebook," 2011 International Conference on Collaboration Technologies and Systems (CTS), Philadelphia, PA, USA. pp. 569-578, doi: 10.1109/CTS.2011.5928738.

Wilk, T., & Gimbel, S. (2024). In on the Joke: The Ethics of Humor and Comedy (Vol. 4). Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG.

Witney C, Hendricks J, Cope V. (2016).Variation of Kozinets' framework and its application to nursing research. Nurse Researcher. 23, 5, 36-41

Zanin, A. C., Hoelscher, C. S., & Kramer, M. W. (2016). Extending Symbolic Convergence Theory: A Shared Identity Perspective of a Team's Culture. Small Group Research, 47(4), 438-472. https://doi.org/10.1177/104649641665855

Zhang, J., &Juvrud, J. (2024). Gender expression and gender identity in virtual reality: avatars, role-adoption, and social interaction in VRChat. Frontiers in Virtual Reality, 5, 1305758.

Tuncer, H., Mishra, S., & Shenoy, N. (2012). A survey of identity and handoff management approaches for the future Internet. Computer Communications, 36(1), 63–79. doi:10.1016/j.comcom.2012.07