



Journal of Social and Political Sciences

Apriansyah, M. R., Prasetyo, K., & Amran, A. S. (2026), Edutainment in Gaming Culture: Audience Reception of R7 Tatsumaki's Tutor7 Youtube Tutorials for Mobile Legends. *Journal of Social and Political Sciences*, 9(1), 42-57.

ISSN 2615-3718

DOI: 10.31014/aior.1991.09.01.614

The online version of this article can be found at:
<https://www.asianinstituteofresearch.org/>

Published by:
The Asian Institute of Research

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Edutainment in Gaming Culture: Audience Reception of R7 Tatsumaki's Tutor7 Youtube Tutorials for Mobile Legends

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Abstract

Mobile gaming culture in Indonesia has evolved into a digital cultural practice that facilitates community interaction, player identity formation, and informal learning through video-sharing platforms. This article analyzes audience reception of Tutor7 playlist on R7 Tatsumaki YouTube channel as an edutainment practice in Mobile Legends culture. The research uses a qualitative approach with a reception analysis design based on Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with 10 informants, with purposively selected samples (Mobile Legends players and Tutor7 viewers), which were then analyzed thematically through the stages of reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that audiences perceive Tutor7 as a source of practical and easily transferable strategies to game situations, primarily due to its concise explanations and the creator's credibility. The entertainment element acts as a bridge that makes the learning process feel easy, but some informants considered the depth of explanations in some episodes limited, positioning Tutor7 as a supplementary resource, not a fully comprehensive learning experience. Strategy implementation is also selective, depending on playing style and match context. Overall, audience reception is concentrated on the position of dominant and negotiation, without any indication of total rejection. This article enriches the study of digital communication by positioning gaming tutorials as cultural texts and platform-based informal learning spaces.

Keywords: Audience Reception, Edutainment, Gaming Culture, Mobile Legends, Youtube Tutorials

1. Introduction

Mobile gaming culture in Indonesia has evolved beyond mere recreational activity. It has become a digital cultural practice that provides a space for interaction, informal learning, and the formation of player identities within online communities. One prominent genre is multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA), which was reported to be the most popular mobile game genre in Indonesia at one time, as reported in Figure 1 (Annur, 2023). In an increasingly connected digital landscape, information and entertainment consumption patterns have also shifted: audiences are increasingly using video-sharing platforms and social media to fulfil their learning needs, including learning game strategies through content creators (Mayfield, 2008; Thompson, 2025).

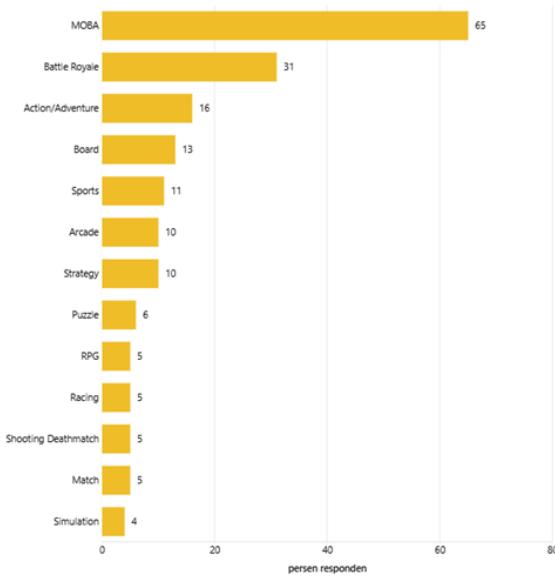


Figure 1: The Most Popular Mobile Game Genres in Indonesia

Source: <https://databoks.katadata.co.id/media/statistik/f0ddaa3362ba4340/moba-jadi-genre-mobile-game-paling-disukai-di-indonesia>

This development aligns with the characteristics of digital communication, which enables participation, rapid feedback, and more fluid interactions than conventional media (Gushevinalti et al., 2020). YouTube occupies a crucial position as a platform for the widespread distribution of educational videos. It is produced by both institutions and independent creators and has become a dominant medium for video-based learning practices on the internet (Kleftodimos et al., 2020). In the context of gaming, video tutorials serve not only as technical guides but also as “learning spaces” packaged with a distinctive style of entertainment, community language, humor, and audio-visual aesthetics. Thus, gaming tutorial content can be understood as an edutainment practice, specifically materials/media/activities that are deliberately designed to be both educational and fun (Pojani & Rocco, 2020).

Conceptually, edutainment is often positioned as a bridge between cognitive needs (learning) and affective needs (entertainment). Pojani and Rocco (2020) emphasize that edutainment exists as a combination of “education” and “entertainment” and can provide learning value when its activities encourage engagement, practice, and intrinsic motivation. In the realm of video-based learning, Kleftodimos et al. (2020) show that educational videos circulating on the web are abundant, but not always rich in interactivity; therefore, approaches that incorporate elements of practice, activity, or game nuances can be a strategy to increase learning engagement. When drawn to gaming culture, YouTube tutorials that “teach while entertaining” have strong potential: they package strategic knowledge as a viewing experience that is light, accessible, and relevant to everyday gaming situations.

Furthermore, the game itself can be understood as a multimodal cultural text: it works through a combination of visuals, audio, symbols, and narratives that produce meaning for players. Krishnapatria (2019) shows how Mobile Legends: Bang Bang (MLBB) utilizes audio-visual and semiotic modalities to construct representations of characters, roles, and specific meanings, which emphasizes that the gaming experience is not neutral, but rather fraught with constructions of meaning. When this experience is transmitted to the YouTube space through tutorials, the resulting content is no longer simply “playing techniques”, but also communication practices that negotiate meaning what constitutes “correct” play, “effective” strategies, “ideal” playing styles, and how to become part of the MLBB culture.

In this study, the focus is directed at the Tutor7 tutorial series on R7 Tatsumaki YouTube channel, which is widely known among MLBB audiences. The popularity of gaming creators is often supported by credibility, content consistency, and the ability to package material so that it is easy to understand and enjoy (Nagy & Hajdú, 2022; Widiastuti & Fauziya, 2024). However, audience reception of content is never completely uniform. In communication studies, audiences are understood as active subjects who interpret messages based on their

experiences, needs, and social context (Severin & Tankard, 2007 in Suciska & Gunawibawa, 2020; West & Turner, 2008). Therefore, it is important to examine not only “what” is conveyed in Tutor7, but also “how” the audience interprets and uses the content: whether it is perceived as purely educational, purely entertaining, or a combination of both (edutainment), and what factors shape the variation in acceptance.

A relevant framework to explain these dynamics is reception analysis by Stuart Hall through the concept of encoding/decoding (Hall, 1973). Hall views media messages as the result of production (encoding) that carries certain meaning preferences, but the final meaning is formed when the audience interprets (decoding) in everyday life. In the decoding process, Hall proposed dominant-hegemonic, negotiated, and oppositional reading positions, which help researchers map the variety of audience reception of the same message (Hall, 1973). This perspective is in line with the emphasis that mass communication and digital media need to be read through the relationship between message production, media texts, and the context of audience reception (Baran, 2003; Severin & Tankard, 2007 in Suciska & Gunawibawa, 2020). In fact, meaning making is understood as an open process and has the potential to produce different interpretations, depending on the conditions and experiences of the audience (Saputra et al., 2024).

Furthermore, if Tutor7 is understood as a form of platform-based distance learning, then the interaction dimension also becomes important. The concept of three types of interaction in distance education emphasizes interaction with content, interaction with teachers, and interaction between students, which in the context of YouTube can appear through video material, comments, live chat, as well as discussions between viewers (Tuan, 2025). On the other hand, educational media is understood as a learning aid that can influence the attention, understanding, and engagement of learners (Irsan, 2021). Therefore, it is relevant to assess how Tutor7’s audience experiences the learning process: whether they apply the strategies, use the tutorials as a reference during gameplay, or simply watch for entertainment with incidental learning benefits.

Based on this context, this article aims to analyze audience reception of the Tutor7 series on the R7 Tatsumaki channel as an edutainment practice in gaming culture. Specifically, this study seeks to (1) identify how audiences interpret Tutor7 content, whether dominant, negotiating, or opposing the creator’s encoded meaning; (2) explain the factors of gaming experience, learning needs, and social context that shape differences in meaning; and (3) map how educational elements (strategies, technical explanations) and entertainment elements (delivery style, persona, community dynamics) intertwine in the viewing experience. Thus, this article’s contribution is to enrich the study of digital communication and popular culture by positioning gaming tutorials as media texts that are not only informative, but also full of negotiations of meaning between creators, platforms, and audiences.

1.1 Digital Communication in the New Media Ecosystem

In contemporary communication studies, digital communication is understood as a communication practice mediated by computer and internet technology, thus enabling the exchange of messages to be fast, interactive, and real time (Cangara, 2019; Nasrullah, 2018). The development of digitalization has also shifted the way individuals and organizations disseminate information: from email, forums, blogs, to social networks, expanding the form, reach, and rhythm of message consumption in the digital public space (Suherman, 2023). In this context, the internet has become the primary of new media infrastructure because of its flexible, interactive nature, and facilitates the dual role of the audience as both recipient and sender of messages (McQuail, 2011; Mondry, 2008). The character of interactivity in new media is important because it opens space for audience participation in the production and distribution of content, a prerequisite that explains why user-generated platforms like YouTube can grow as arenas for popular culture, informal learning, and active digital communities (McQuail, 2011; Mondry, 2008).

In the new media ecosystem, which is increasingly hybrid, the shift from mass communication patterns that tend to be one-way towards more selective and participatory digital communication has also given rise to new actors in the public sphere, including influencers who build audience communities primarily through visibility on social networks. Audiences now access information through three interconnected channels: search engines/AI tools, content recommendations on social media, and direct access to media, so that the mediating authority of traditional

media is no longer dominant. In this context, recommendation algorithms and user preferences drive content segmentation and shape “filter bubble”, which ultimately accelerates the fragmentation of audiences into smaller, more homogeneous interest groups (Palau-Sampio & López-García, 2025). This framework is relevant for reading YouTube as both an informal learning space and a popular culture arena: Mobile Legends tutorials from creators like R7 Tatsumaki/Tutor7 function not only as instructional materials, but also as community-based communication products, where audience exposure, meaning, and engagement are influenced by the platform’s recommendation logic and the audience’s proximity to the creator and their network.

1.2 Social Media, Audience Participation, and YouTube as Informal Learning Spaces

Social media is defined as internet-based media that allows users to participate, share, and create content, including blogs, social networks, online forums, and virtual worlds (Mayfield, 2008; Wahyuni et al., 2023). One prominent characteristic is the interactivity seen through activities such as commenting, tagging, and responding to other people’s content, which ultimately forms networks and exchanges of meaning between users (Nasrullah, 2015). For this research, YouTube is relevant not only as a video distribution platform but also as a space for interaction and experiential learning. YouTube is positioned as a popular social media platform that presents educational audio-visual content, including tutorials that support the audience’s learning process through easy-to-follow demonstrations (Bond et al., 2021; Widiastuti & Fauziya, 2024). Thus, YouTube operates as an informal “classroom” connected to digital culture, especially when the content presented stems from the audience’s practical needs, for example, improving gaming skills.

Social media is also increasingly positioned as an infrastructure of informal learning because learning occurs outside the classroom, is relatively unstructured, and is largely driven by user initiative, within this framework, learning often appears as a “residue” of social interactions that generate practical knowledge (Al-Sabaawi et al., 2022). Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube enable users to connect, engage, and adapt through networking and interaction features, making them relevant for informal learning and collaboration activities. The study also developed a social media acceptance model for informal learning (based on the integration of TAM3 and constructivism) that highlights the importance of factors such as perceived usefulness, ease of use, information quality, as well as dimensions of interactivity–communication–collaboration in shaping the intention and behaviour of using social media for learning (Al-Sabaawi et al., 2022). This theoretical implication aligns with the research context of your article: the consumption of YouTube tutorials (for example Tutor7) can be understood not simply as a viewing activity, but as an informal learning practice triggered by the perceived usefulness of the content, the quality of the information, and the opportunities for community interaction in the comment space and the surrounding social network (Al-Sabaawi et al., 2022).

1.3 Media as Education Platform and Edutainment Logic

Media and educational studies emphasize that the media’s function extends beyond entertainment; it can also be an effective educational tool when designed to increase audience attention, understanding, and engagement (Irsan, 2021). In the context of digital learning, institutional and individual adaptation to information and communication technology is crucial to maintaining the relevance of learning processes amidst global change (Agustian & Salsabila, 2021).

From the perspective of edutainment, learning can be more effective when educational elements are combined with fun and participatory experiences. The additional literature you attached reinforces this aspect: Kleftodimos et al. (2020) showed that learning videos can be enriched with interactive activities and game elements (game-based learning) to increase engagement and practice, so that videos are not just passive viewing. Kleftodimos et al. (2020). This finding is important for reading game tutorial content (such as Tutor7) as an edutainment format, where the audience learns through demonstrations, repeated practice, and self-evaluation while practicing strategies within the game. Furthermore, Pojani and Rocco (2020) show that game-based activities can help participants understand roles, perspectives, and the complexity of situations through hands-on experience, role-taking, and discussion, although each performer’s interpretation may still differ due to their diverse backgrounds

and experiences. This aligns with the basic assumption of reception research: meaning is not automatically “accepted” but rather negotiated by the audience.

As an edutainment framework reinforcement in the context of learning videos, Othman et al. (2022) showed that the element of “entertainment” in video-based learning can be mapped to specific elements that make the audience feel comfortable while remaining focused on the learning process. In the components of edutainment feature, they emphasized emotional attraction which can be built through the appeal of music (musical interest), speaking techniques such as intonation/speed/formality (speech element), as well as the use of figures/characters (including talking head) as character representation to help the audience follow the explanation in a more personal and easy to understand way. In addition, the activity dimensions are also important because edutainment not just “watching” but encouraging interaction through social interactivity opportunities and interactive questioning as a reflection of learning. When elaborated in the context of a game tutorial channel like Tutor7, these elements are relevant to explaining why audiences perceive the content as “entertaining learning”: not only because of the strategic content, but also because of the delivery style, the presence of the creator, and the invitation/question patterns that encourage participation and self-evaluation when practicing the strategies in the game.

1.4 Gaming Culture and Mobile Legends as a Mediator of Popular Culture

Gaming culture positions games not merely as entertainment products, but as social and cultural practices that shape lifestyles, identities, and communities. In the context of Mobile Legends, learning occurs not only in the game’s mechanics but also in digital literacy: how audiences seek information, follow tutorials, assess creators’ credibility, and integrate new knowledge into their playing practices. Additional literature from Krishnapatria (2019) confirms that mobile games provide vivid and interactive audio-visual experiences and require players to complete gameplay sessions within a certain duration by making play practices intense, structured, and competitive. In such situations, YouTube tutorials serve as “learning capital” that helps players accelerate skill development and adapt to the metagame. Thus, edutainment in gaming culture can be understood as a learning process that arises from performative needs (wanting to become more proficient, rank up, or understand strategies), but is wrapped in an entertainment format that integrates with the audience’s digital experience.

Within the framework of popular culture, mobile games such as Mobile Legends can be positioned as part of pop culture, which is increasingly strengthened by the process of mediation: digital media not only “transmits” experiences, but also promotes, shapes, and normalizes the practice of cultural consumption (Rafique et al., 2022). Furthermore, Rafique et al. (2022) emphasize that media play a crucial role in popularizing popular culture through various mediated sources, including online video gaming and mobile applications, and demonstrate that technological developments enable digital media to facilitate “real-life experiences” in the form of online games. On the other hand, audience/player engagement is driven by the dynamics of achievement and rewards. Players play online games because they gain “rewards” and a sense of productivity after achieving certain goals. Therefore, YouTube tutorials like Tutor7 can be understood as an extension of a popular culture ecosystem that works both ways: gaming culture drives the need for rapid learning (strategy, meta, performance), while the media (YouTube) expands access and strengthens the reproduction of that culture, making edutainment as a learning format inherent in gaming culture consumption practices.

1.4 Theory of Active Audience and Reception Analysis (Encoding-Decoding)

This research initiates from the assumption of an active audience, which positions the audience as active subjects. They select, interpret, and respond to messages according to their needs and background experience (West & Turner, 2008). Therefore, educational messages in tutorials do not automatically produce a uniform understanding; the audience can negotiate, accept some, or even reject certain meanings. Stuart Hall’s reception analysis serves as a central framework explaining how meaning is produced and received through three moments: encoding (message formation by content creators), formation/determination of meaning, and decoding (interpretation by the audience) (Saputra et al., 2024). At the decoding stage, the interpretation results are influenced by the social context, experience, and position of the audience, so that the potential of misunderstanding or differences in reading are always open (Saputra et al., 2024). In Hall’s framework, there are three main reading positions:

dominant-hegemonic, negotiated, and oppositional. Each of which indicates the audience's level of acceptance of the code of meaning offered by the message creator. This framework is relevant to examining Tutor7 content: whether the audience accepts the tutorial as the "best way" to play (dominant), accepts it with certain adjustments according to playing experience (negotiated), or rejects it because it does not match their playing preferences/methods (oppositional).

As a strengthening of the foundation of an active audience in reception analysis, Briandana and Azmawati's study shows that the audience's interpretation of YouTube content is never singular because media texts are polysemic: one event/message can be interpreted in more than one way, and the meaning cannot be "closed" to just one reading. Within the reception analysis framework, which focuses on the encoding/decoding model, Stuart Hall emphasizes that audiences actively construct meaning based on the text-context relationship, allowing readings to shift from dominance, negotiation, to opposition (Briandana & Azmawati, 2020). Their findings also demonstrate that audience interpretations are often dominant, yet allow for differing readings due to the varied experiences, socio-cultural backgrounds, and values of each informant. This logic is relevant with the research on game tutorials: the "educational" messages conveyed encoding by the creator (for example strategy, mechanics, and decision-making in Mobile Legends) can be accepted dominantly by some audiences as the main reference, but can also be negotiated by other audiences according to their playing hours, playing style preferences, and performance needs, which ultimately enriches the mapping of reception positions in the context of gaming culture and edutainment.

1.5 Audience Interaction in Digital Space and Its Communicative Consequences

Beyond meaning, audience interaction is also an important dimension in the YouTube ecosystem. Interaction is viewed as a two-way exchange facilitated by digital technology, allowing audiences to provide direct feedback on content (Cangara, 2019). This reciprocal relationship also aligns with the idea that digital communication encourages audience participation in discussions, communities, and even creator popularity (Puntoadi, 2011). In the context of game tutorials, the comment section can function as a space for negotiating meaning: audiences compare experiences, ask for clarification, test the effectiveness of strategies, and provide testimonials of success/failure. In addition, interactions on social media can influence audience engagement patterns, whether in the form of responses, support, or criticism of content (Nasrullah, 2015). Thus, audience acceptance of Tutor7 is not only reflected in "watching", but also in how audiences dialogue, practice, and reframe the tutorial content within the gaming community.

These findings on audience interaction in digital spaces can be strengthened by research on media interactivity, which shows that user engagement tends to be dominated by "low-effort" forms of interactivity (for example: rating, short comments, or quick feedback), while participatory features that require more effort (such as: co-creating/improving content) are relatively less popular (Zagorulko et al., 2025). In the context of YouTube game tutorials, this pattern is relevant for understanding audience reception: a low number of lengthy comments does not necessarily mean low engagement, as audiences can feel "involved" through quick actions such as liking, subscribing, or short comments that confirm their experiences. At the same time, Zagorulko et al. (2025) also emphasize that audiences often interpret interactivity pragmatically as a means of clarifying understanding and maximizing cognitive benefits, rather than simply entertainment or gamification. Thus, interaction with Tutor7 content can be positioned as part of a "light but functional" learning and negotiation process of meaning, in line with the nature of digital communication that facilitates rapid feedback and experience-based discussions within the gaming community.

2. Method

This research starts from the constructivist paradigm, which views social reality as the result of the construction of meaning formed through the experiences and social interactions of actors (Hidayat, 2003; Patton, 2002). Within this framework, the audience's interpretation of game tutorial content is understood as an interpretive process that is not singular, but rather depends on the experience, knowledge, and social context of each viewer.

This study uses a qualitative approach to understand phenomena in depth through narratives, experiences, and explanations from informants. Qualitative approach is used because the research emphasizes meaning and the interpretation process, rather than quantitative measurement of variables. Specifically, the research applies reception analysis with the main reference to the model of encoding/decoding by Stuart Hall. Reception analysis focuses on how audiences decode media texts in everyday contexts and how they construct a deeper understanding of them. The relevance of this model is also demonstrated by recent studies that continue to use Hall's decoding categories (dominant, negotiated, oppositional) to interpret audience positions after consuming YouTube content (Anshar et al., 2024).

Research subjects are an audience who: (1) are Mobile Legends players, and (2) watch the R7 Tatsumaki YouTube channel, especially the Tutor7 playlist. The selection of informants was carried out by purposive sampling: selecting individuals with characteristics that match the research objectives so that they can provide information relevant to the research focus (Ika, 2021). Informant criteria include age 18-25 years, active YouTube users, watching Tutor7 playlists, following R7 Tatsumaki on social media, and having at least 6 months of experience playing Mobile Legends. This study involved 10 informants, as shown in the research informant profile in Table 1.

Table 1: Informant's Profile

Informant	Age	Start playing Mobile Legends	Playing duration	Youtube habits	Subscribe R7 since	Frequently watched content	Note
1	21	2019 (Season 4)	3–6 hours/day	3–4 hours/day	2020	Tutorial & livestream ML	Intense play & high content consumption; relevant for educational reception.
2	21	2017	6–7 hours/week	Watch it every day	2021	ML Content (strategy)	The variance between high experience and rank is now lower; interesting for decoding/negotiating meaning.
3	21	2018	4–5 hours/week	±9 times/week (high frequency)	2021	Comedy (exe), pro tournaments, ML content	Extensive cross-game experience; enriching the cultural context of gaming.
4	20	2019	±5 hours/day (±35 hours/week)	±1 hour/day	2023	ML Gameplay & Strategy	High playtime & peak performance; relevant for evaluating the “effectiveness” of tutorials.
5	21	Since the age of 14 (year not stated)	±1 hour/day (±7 hours/week)	±3 hours/week	Sep 2024	Game-related entertainment	ML duration is light but has been competitive, providing a “casual–

							competitive” user perspective.
6	24	2017	1–2 hours/d ay	±4 hours/week	2022	Informative & Entertaining (ML)	Focus on one game; tutorial reception is more “in-depth/selective”.
7	21	Since junior high school (year not stated)	±2 hours/d ay	±3 hours/day	Since the RRQ era	Game content (including R7)	High exposure to gaming content; suitable for viewing the role of tutorials as daily informal learning.
8	21	2018 (Season 2)	Uncerta in (situatio nal)	Frequently (especially during mealtimes/l eisure time)	Since R7 joined RRQ	Movie reviews (dominant), also ML content	“Multi-interest” profile (movies + games); useful for viewing non-focused ML reception positions.
9	21	2016	±3 hours/w eek	±8–9 hours/week	Since May 2025	R7 (entertainment & strategy reference)	Focus on ML only; relevant for reading the “entertainment–reference” relationship within a single channel.
10	20	2018	±5 hours/d ay	±4 hours/day	“Since a long time ago”	Horor, turnamen ML, growth mindset, R7	Representation of female players; high digital clock; important for the variety of audience experiences.

Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews. Interviews were used to explore audience perceptions, attitudes, and experiences, allowing researchers to more comprehensively understand their reception/interpretation of the educational content in the Tutor7 playlist. Secondary data was obtained through literature review (such as journals, books and relevant online sources) and documentation (notes, reports, or digital content related to the research object). This strategy is used to complement and strengthen the interpretation of findings from primary data.

Data analysis was performed using an interactive model by Miles & Huberman, which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing/verifying conclusions. In practice, interview transcripts are reduced to select the most relevant parts to the audience’s focus on meaning, then presented narratively/thematically, and conclusions are drawn through repeated verification. Next, the interpretation results are mapped into Hall’s decoding categories (dominant, negotiated, and oppositional) as a framework for classifying audience reception positions (Anshar et al., 2024). As conceptual support, reception research also emphasizes that media texts are

polysemy, so that the audience can produce different readings depending on their social position and cultural experience (Briandana & Azmawati, 2019).

Data validity is maintained through source triangulation, comparing information from several informants and checking for consistency of emerging meanings to increase the credibility of the findings. This technique is emphasized through references to source triangulation and elaboration of triangulation practices in qualitative research (Bachri, 2010; Alfansyur & Andarusni, 2020).

3. Results

This section presents the main findings from audience reception of the Tutor7 playlist on R7 Tatsumaki YouTube channel. Based on interviews with 10 informants, informants generally consider Tutor7 a strategic reference for improving Mobile Legends performance. However, acceptance varies depending on playing experience, playstyle preferences, and viewing goals. The findings confirm five key patterns that consistently emerged in the interview data, as presented in Table 2: First, Tutor7 was perceived as a practical strategy learning tool because informants found the knowledge easily transferable to real-life game situations. Second, the clarity of explanation and credibility of R7 strengthened message acceptance, as audiences perceived concise and reliable guidance. Third, the entertainment element served as a learning “bridge”: the relaxed style kept the material from feeling overwhelming, allowing audiences to still gain educational benefits while enjoying the viewing experience. Fourth, some informants emphasized certain limitations, for example, the depth of explanation that positioned Tutor7 as a supplementary resource, rather than a fully comprehensive learning experience. Fifth, strategy implementation tended to be selective; audiences selected sections that suited their playing style and match context, confirming the negotiation of meaning in interpreting gaming tutorial content.

3.1 *Tutor7 is perceived as a strategy learning medium that is “practical” and easily transferred to games*

Most informants interpreted Tutor7 as content that provides applied knowledge, especially regarding rotation, laning, hero usage, item builds, and decision-making during team fights. Several informants emphasized that this knowledge felt “immediately applicable” and helped them understand the correct playing patterns, for example: *“After watching Tutor7, I understand rotation and the correct laning method better...”*. In this category, Tutor7 is perceived not just as a game show, but as experiential learning (experience-based learning) presented in a concise, coherent, and applicable format. This is evident from the informant's assessment that the content is systematically structured for hero learning: *“Tutor7 is perfect for learning heroes because it is made in a coherent and easy to understand way, not just for fun...”*. This finding also comes in the form of an acknowledgement that Tutor7 enriches both micro (role-specific mechanics) and macro (team strategy) insights: *“R7 provides knowledge and tips such as how to use heroes and win team fights...”*.

3.2 *The clarity of the explanation and credibility of R7 strengthen the acceptance of the educational message*

Besides the strategic content, an important factor in acceptance was the way R7 was presented, which was perceived as clear and to the point. Informant-1, for example, emphasized that his viewing orientation was more about learning than entertainment: *“If R7 explains it very clearly and straight to the point, so I watch it not for entertainment, but to learn...”*. In several statements, R7's credibility as an experienced figure (associated with playing competence) made informants more confident in the validity of the strategies presented. Thus, educational messages “encoded” through strategy explanations tended to be more strongly accepted when informants perceived the content creator as a competent source.

3.3 *Edutainment: entertainment is seen as a “bridge” for the learning process*

Key findings indicate that audiences perceive Tutor7 as content that combines two functions: education and entertainment. Even though the delivery style was considered relaxed, some informants found it helpful in understanding. Informant-10 stated: *“Even though the presentation was relaxed, I still learned something new. So, I think this is a useful form of entertainment...”*. A similar view emerged from Informant-2, who felt that the

relaxed style made the material not feel “heavy”: “*If it’s too serious, it’ll be difficult. R7’s relaxed approach made it easier for me to understand his explanations...*”. However, not all informants considered Tutor7 as “formal” learning. Informant-8 offered a more critical assessment: “*Sometimes the explanations are not very detailed, so I consider it not a full learning experience, more of an additional reference...*”. Meanwhile Informant-9 summarizes the middle position by assessing the flexibility of the content: “*I think it’s half-half. There are serious parts, but it’s also chilly. So, it can still be used for learning...*”. Overall, the study concluded that Tutor7 was perceived as a blend of entertainment and education; some audiences emphasized concrete learning, some enjoyed the entertainment aspect, and some saw both as a combination.

3.4 Informal Learning as a Supplement: Tutor7 as a Complementary Resource

The results showed that some informants interpreted Tutor7 as a form of informal learning: beneficial but not always understood as a fully comprehensive learning experience as formal learning or structured training. This assessment emerged especially when informants highlighted the limited depth of explanation in several episodes, so that Tutor7 is more appropriately positioned as additional references to enrich insight and aid decision-making in the game, not as the sole source of primary learning. Informant-8, for example, explicitly states that detailed explanations are sometimes insufficient to be considered complete learning: “*Sometimes the explanations are not very detailed, so I consider it not a full learning experience, more of an additional reference...*”. A similar view is also seen in Informant-9 who places Tutor7 in the middle position: acknowledging that there are serious parts but still within the framework of entertainment, so that the learning function is not completely formal: “*There are serious parts, but they’re also entertaining. So, it can still be used for learning...*”. These findings indicate that audiences differentiate between “formal learning” and “practical learning” in the digital space: Tutor7 is valued for providing quick and applicable strategic insights, but for some informants, the limited depth or detail makes it more appropriately understood as complementary learning tools that support skill improvement, not a comprehensive and systematic learning experience.

3.5 Negotiation acceptance: strategy is considered important, but is applied selectively

Beyond dominant acceptance, a pattern of negotiated acceptance emerged when informants assessed that not all R7’s suggestions could be followed unconditionally. A frequently cited factor was the difference in personal playing style and the context of public play. Informant-7 emphasized that he uses Tutor7 as a reference but does not always follow all the advice: “*There are times when I feel like my playing style differs from R7’s, so I don’t always follow it. But I still use it as a reference...*”. Informant-10 also emphasized the importance of adapting strategy to the player’s character: “*You don’t have to copy everything, because everyone has their own playing style. Let’s just take what suits you...*”. These findings demonstrate that audiences are not passive; strategic messages are processed through their experiences, needs, and playing situations. In other words, Tutor7 is seen as an important reference, yet it is still “processed” according to individual preferences.

Table 2: Thematic Findings

Result theme	Key indicators (what the audience values)	Informant citation evidence (example)	The meaning of reception
Tutor7 as a practical learning strategy	“Right-to-use” strategy; understanding rotation/laning/team fights	“After watching Tutor7, I understand rotation and the correct laning method better”.	Tutor7 is positioned as a practice-based informal learning (learning-by-doing).
Clarity of delivery & credibility R7	Concise, clear, to the point explanation; trusted for competence	“R7 explains it very clearly and gets straight to the point, so I watch it not for entertainment, but to learn”.	The creator’s credibility strengthens the acceptance of educational messages (dominant reading increases).
Edutainment as a learning bridge	Relaxed/entertaining style helps with material acceptance	“Even though the presentation was relaxed, I still learned something new. So, I think	Entertainment facilitates understanding; education

Learning is not always “formal”	Material is considered supplementary reference; details are sometimes limited.	this is a worthwhile form of entertainment”.	doesn't have to be formal to be valuable.
Selective implementation of strategies	Adapting to the play style and context of public matches	“Sometimes the explanations aren't very detailed, so I don't consider them a complete learning experience, more of an additional reference”.	The audience accepts the educational function but limits the effectiveness claims (negotiated).

“There are times when I feel like my playing style is different from R7's... but I still use it as a reference”.	Negotiation of meaning occurs when audiences filter strategies to suit personal needs.
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Figure 2 shows that the audience's reception of Tutor7 was formed through a sequential flow: starting from exposure to content containing playing strategies (rotation, laning, hero/build selection, to team fight decision-making), reinforced by the clarity of delivery and credibility of the creator, and packaged in a relaxed style that brings out the edutainment character. This combination of elements resulted in a dominant perception of benefits: the content was perceived as “immediately usable”, helped clarify strategies, and made the learning process feel easier. From this perception of benefits, the audience then moved to the implementation stage: some fully implemented the strategies and thus tended to be in a dominant reading position, while others continued to receive the educational messages but selectively adapted them to the context of the game and their personal playing style, which placed them in a negotiating position; the findings did not indicate a pattern of overall rejection (opposition) to Tutor7's main message.

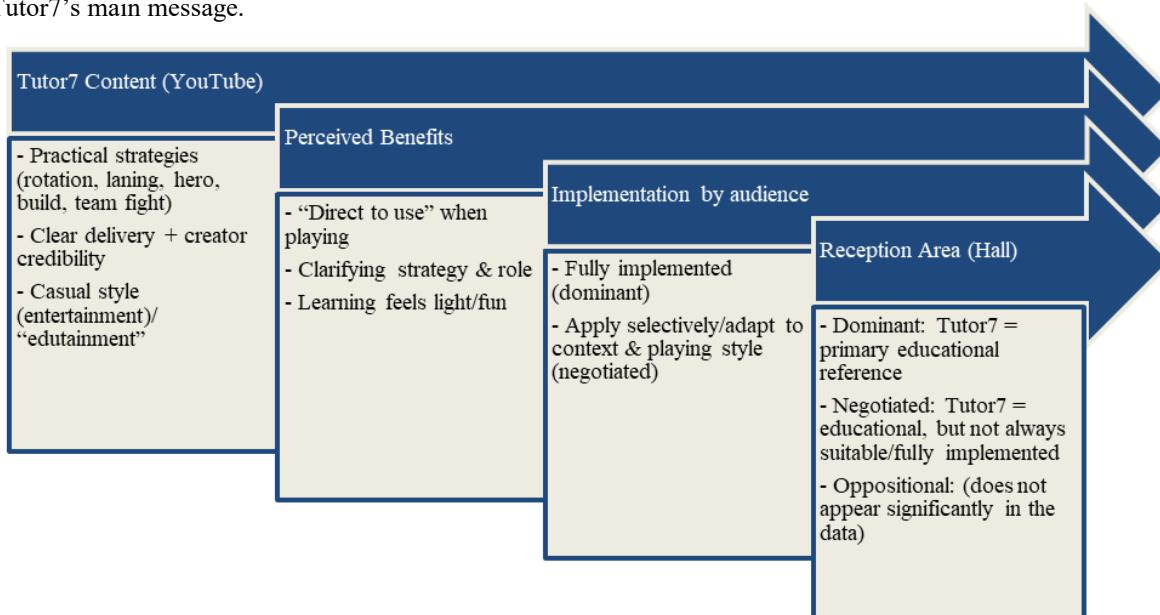


Figure 2. Audience Reception Flow

4. Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that the edutainment practice in gaming culture not only works at the level of “informative entertainment”, but also at the level of reception of meaning: how the audience interprets, negotiates, and then applies the messages encoded by the creator. Within the encoding-decoding Stuart Hall's framework, media messages are not automatically received uniformly; the final meaning is formed when the audience makes decoding based on their gaming experiences, learning needs, and social context. Research data shows that the reception of Tutor7 content on Tatsumaki's R7 channel falls into two main categories: dominant-hegemonic and negotiated, without finding an oppositional position. This pattern is important because it shows that “education in

“gaming culture” is more often accepted as resource which is useful rather than being rejected as an irrelevant message, although there remains room for negotiation in the form of selectivity and limitation of content function.

4.1. Tutor7 as a digital communication that is “fast, visual, and applicable”

The dominance of audience reception can be understood through the characteristics of digital communication which allows for message delivery in fast, interactive and real-time. The encoding process is seen from the gameplay format, strategy explanations, and visual-verbal delivery of tips; this is understood as a form of internet-based communication that facilitates instant access to knowledge. Digital communication literature emphasizes that internet media changes the rhythm of information consumption to be more concise, flexible, and closer to the audience’s daily routine (Cangara, 2019; Nasrullah, 2018). In the context of competitive games like MLBB, the need for strategic learning is situational: players need “quick answers” regarding rotations, mechanics, or decision making amidst performance pressures. Therefore, the video tutorial format is a channel that aligns with both players’ cognitive needs and their content consumption habits on the platform.

The suitability of this format is reinforced by the findings of dominant informants who felt an increase in understanding (for example the role of roammers opening maps, rotation, team fight, as well as macro-micro awareness) after watching Tutor7. One dominant narrative describes an increased understanding of roles and mechanics through content that is perceived as relevant and well-structured. Thus, it is not only the content of the message that is perceived as “useful”, but also the way it is presented that leads the audience to evaluate the content as effective as learning aid, in line with the view that educational media can increase attention and understanding when it suits the learning style and needs of the recipient (Irsan, 2021; Agustian & Salsabila, 2021).

4.2. Why the dominant reception is strong: credibility, performance needs, and an active audience

Most of the dominant receptions can be explained through the concept of an active audience. The dominant findings are reinforced by the assumption that audiences consciously choose media to fulfil both cognitive and affective needs (Severin & Tankard, 2007 in Suciska & Gunawibawa, 2020). When audiences watch Tutor7 with the goal of improving their playing skills, the decoding process tends to be in line with the intent encoding, making the tutorial a credible and relevant strategic reference. At this stage, edutainment not just a mix of learning and entertainment, but a communication strategy that fulfils both performance needs (ranking up, understanding the meta, improving mechanics) and affective needs (watching relaxed, fun, non-rigid content).

In addition, the creator’s credibility plays a role as meaning anchor. The dominant informant assessed that R7 conveyed the strategy from a professional (competitive) perspective so that the message was understood as a trustworthy “code”. In uses and gratifications logic, this is a natural condition: when the source is perceived as competent and the audience’s experience supports the message’s relevance, dominant acceptance is more likely. This means that gaming tutorials operate like “informal classes” whose primary legitimacy lies not in the institution but in performative reputation: whoever plays better is more likely to be trusted to teach.

4.3. Negotiating meaning: edutainment as “learning, but not always full”

Despite the strong dominance, the negotiation findings indicate that audiences still engage in critical and adaptive reading. Negotiation occurs when audiences accept the main idea that Tutor7 is educational but limit or modify its application according to playing conditions, preferences, and personal needs. For example, one informant stated that the explanation was “not too detailed”, so the content was not considered a complete lesson, but rather “an additional reference”. This is consistent with Hall’s definition of the negotiation position: audiences “accept within limits” but adapt the meaning to suit their own interests.

This pattern is relevant to the edutainment literature, which positions edutainment as a bridge between cognitive and affective needs, that is, learning occurs through engaging experiences but does not necessarily replace formal learning. The concept of edutainment emphasizes the design of materials or activities that are both educational and enjoyable to encourage engagement and intrinsic motivation (Pojani & Rocco, 2020). In Tutor7, the negotiation

informant emphasized the “two functions” that run side by side: there are serious parts and there are light-hearted parts, so that the content can still be used for learning without losing the entertainment aspect. At this point, edutainment functions as low-friction learning: learning is presented in a format that is not burdensome, but the consequence is that the depth of the material may be perceived as limited by some audiences.

4.4. Selectivity and adaptation of strategy: tutorial “code” does not always match the game situation

Negotiation also occurs at the practical level: audiences do not copy strategies blindly but rather select and adapt. In the data, some informants stated that implementing strategies requires adjustments to game conditions. This suggests that decoding does not stop at understanding but continues to be social practice, that audiences test messages in the dynamic reality of gaming. This is important because competitive gaming is contingent: team composition, hero draft, matches time, and team communication mean that one strategy may not always work in all situations. Therefore, Tutor7 is understood as a “guide” rather than a “rule”.

These findings align with studies of video-based learning that emphasize the importance of interactivity and practice. Kleftodimos et al. (2020) showed that educational videos on the web are abundant, but not always rich in interactivity; therefore, the practice/activity element or nuance can increase learning engagement. In the case of Tutor7, the practice occurs not through formal features quizzes or modules, but through playing game repetition: the audience watches, then tries it out in the next game. This is where gaming’s edutainment comes in: the practice of learning is embedded in the activity of playing itself.

4.5. Why there is no opposition: needs match, but there is still “soft” criticism

The absence of opposition can be interpreted as an indication that Tutor7’s primary message (useful strategies) does not contradict the experiences of most informants. However, the absence of opposition does not imply a passive or uncritical audience. For example, the negotiations that emerged limited the content to supplementary resources or assessing its suitability only for players of a certain level, which represents a form of “soft” criticism that still accepts the educational value but rejects the implicit claim that tutorials are universally applicable. In other words, the audience did not reject meaning preference in total but rejected generalization and demanded contextualization.

Reception literature also reminds us that media is polysemic: a single text can generate multiple readings due to the audience’s differing experiences and socio-cultural positions. Briandana & Azmawati (2019) emphasize that reception focuses on the process of in-depth meaning-making, where individuals are cultural agents who actively produce meaning from media texts, and differences in meaning often arise from differences in experience or social position. In this study, differences in playing levels and performance need to be the differentiating factors between dominance and negotiation.

4.6. Tutor7 as an edutainment ecosystem: interaction, community, and algorithms

Discussions of edutainment in gaming culture also need to consider Tutor7 as a platform ecosystem, not just a one-way creator-audience relationship. Social media allows for participation and interaction, and communication flows not only from creators but also from audience to audience through comments, discussions, and social proof. In the context of distance learning, interactions with content, “teachers” (creators), and fellow “learners” (other viewers or audiences) can occur through the comments column, live chat, or the practice of sharing clips. While this study focuses on informants’ reception of the tutorial content, the interaction dimension remains relevant in explaining why the content feels “live” and accessible: audiences are not learning alone, but rather within a digital public space.

Furthermore, content distribution on YouTube is influenced by recommendation logic. Palau-Sampio & López-García (2025) show how algorithms can fragment audiences and encourage consumption within increasingly homogeneous groups. In practice, MLBB players who frequently watch tutorials will be increasingly “pulled” towards similar content, reinforcing a culture of rapid learning through video and increasing the chances of

dominant reception because the retained audience is one that already shares similar interests and needs. This means that edutainment does not only come from creators but is also reproduced by platform design.

4.7. Theoretical and practical implications

Theoretically, these findings strengthen the relevance of the Hall's encoding-decoding model to read gaming tutorials as cultural texts, not just technical content. Tutor7 contains preferred meaning about "the correct/effective way to play" but audiences still negotiate based on the playing situation and their identities as players. Practically, the dominant findings indicate opportunities for informal, community-based education: when content is presented visually, applicably, and credibly, it can be an effective learning tool for players, even without a formal class structure. However, the negotiation findings highlight its limitations: for certain audiences such as beginners, tutorials can feel insufficiently detailed or require repetition; therefore, content needs to be designed with scaffolding (for example, difficulty level markers, step summaries, or examples of situational adaptations) to make the benefits more evenly distributed.

For creators, this discussion suggests that the success of edutainment is not solely determined by the "right technique" but by the ability to package education in a friendly and flexible style. The informant's statement that Tutor7 is "half-half" means serious yet relaxed, suggesting that persona and communication style are part of the message, encouraging dominant acceptance without eliminating room for negotiation. For communication researchers, this study adds to the evidence that digital popular culture, such as gaming, is a complex arena to produce meaning: learning, entertainment, identity, and platform logic are intertwined in the viewing experience. Finally, it is worth noting that the dominant-negotiation mapping in this study depends on the informants' narratives and their consumption context. Further research could expand the variety of informants (for example, pure beginners, active competitive players, or casual community), as well as combining analysis of YouTube comments or observation of playing practices to see how decoding truly becomes a practice. In addition, future studies can link edutainment with the dynamics of algorithmic visibility and community, for instance, how recommendations and comment interactions reinforce or shift dominant receptions.

Overall, this discussion confirms that Tutor7, as an edutainment practice within gaming culture, operates primarily through credibility, applicable digital communication formats, and audience performance needs, resulting in a strong dominant reception. However, audiences remain active: they negotiate the depth, purpose, and implementation of strategies within the game context. Within the framework of digital communication, this is a form of contemporary popular learning: learning occurs in the entertainment space, but meaning is never completely "closed" to the creator.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that Tutor7 on R7 Tatsumaki's YouTube channel serves as an edutainment practice in gaming culture, that tutorial content is perceived as "useful" because its format is fast, visual, and easy to apply to Mobile Legends performance needs. In terms of reception, most informants are at dominant position (receiving the main message as a reference for effective strategies), while others are at negotiating position, which still recognizes its educational value, but selectively adjusts the application of strategies to match conditions and personal playing style; opposition patterns do not appear significantly in the findings.

From a theoretical perspective, these results strengthen the relevance model encoding-decoding by Stuart Hall to read game tutorials as cultural texts, rather than simply technical content, because the meaning of "correct/effective gameplay" is not automatically accepted, but rather negotiated through the player's experiences, learning needs, and social context. From a practical perspective, the dominant findings confirm the opportunity of community-based informal learning. When content is presented credibly and applicable, it can be an effective learning tool without a formal classroom structure. However, negotiation findings also highlight its limitations for some audiences such as beginners, the explanations may not feel in-depth enough, making the content more appropriately positioned as a supplementary resource, rather than a fully comprehensive learning experience.

Finally, this study emphasizes that Tutor7's edutainment practices are shaped not only by creators but also by the platform's ecosystem, which can reinforce video-based fast-learning habits and encourage the homogenization of audience interests. Since the mapping of dominant-negotiation positions relies on informants' narratives and their consumption contexts, further research could expand the variety of informants (pure beginners, active competitive players, casual community players), while combining interviews with YouTube comment analysis or observation of play practices to see how decoding becomes a recurring practice in everyday gaming.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, Mohammad Rayhan Apriansyah and Kurniawan Prasetyo; Methodology, Kurniawan Prasetyo; Software, Mohammad Rayhan Apriansyah; Validation, Mohammad Rayhan Apriansyah, Kurniawan Prasetyo and Amir Syafiq Amran; Formal Analysis, Kurniawan Prasetyo and Amir Syafiq Amran; Investigation, Mohammad Rayhan Apriansyah; Resources, Mohammad Rayhan Apriansyah; Data Curation, Mohammad Rayhan Apriansyah; Writing - Original Draft Preparation, Mohammad Rayhan Apriansyah and Kurniawan Prasetyo; Writing - Review & Editing, Kurniawan Prasetyo and Amir Syafiq Amran; Visualization, Mohammad Rayhan Apriansyah; Supervision, Kurniawan Prasetyo; Project Administration, Mohammad Rayhan Apriansyah and Kurniawan Prasetyo; Funding Acquisition, Not applicable.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Informed Consent Statement/Ethics approval: Not applicable.

Acknowledgments: The authors would like to acknowledge the Communication Science Study Program, Universitas Mercu Buana, Jakarta, for academic support, and express sincere gratitude to all informants who participated and shared their experiences for this study.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted Technologies: This study has not used any generative AI tools or technologies in the preparation of this manuscript.

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