

Understanding Viewer Fascination with Reaction Videos: A Discourse Analysis of YouTube Comments

Media Watch

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Abstract

Reaction videos have gained significant popularity among the vast array of content available on YouTube, especially during the pandemic. Despite them being an essential part of the YouTube creator economy, scholarly exploration of why reaction videos are popular remains limited. Therefore, this research delves into viewer motivations for watching reaction videos by analysing user comments from four prominent reaction channels: Jaby Koay, The Normies, Blind Wave and RTTV, and understanding them from a uses and gratifications approach. Findings suggest that reaction videos fulfil diverse needs, serving as a means of identity affirmation, promoting fan engagement and fostering community interactions. They provide authentic emotional experiences while offering a virtual space for fans and casual viewers to connect over shared interests, which was much needed, especially during the pandemic when people were socially isolated and under lockdown.

Keywords

Reaction videos, uses and gratifications, YouTube, audience behaviour