



Hashtags and Identity Campaigns as Conversational Themes within the Salmine Fanbase: A Netnographic Study of Salma Salsabil's Fan Community on X

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ABSTRACT

Salmine is a fan community established to support Indonesian singer Salma Salsabil. This fanbase is not only active in expressing emotional support but also plays a strategic role in shaping digital conversations through the use of hashtags on the social media platform X. This study aims to analyze one of the main themes within Salmine's digital discourse, namely the use of hashtags as a means of constructing collective identity and executing digital campaign strategies. Employing a netnographic approach combined with cultural engagement, this research explores how hashtags are utilized to foster solidarity and expand the reach of fan-driven messages. Data were collected through online observation, documentation of social media posts, and data crawling via the NoLimit Dashboard to map the performance of hashtag campaigns. The findings reveal that Salmine's digital campaigns, categorized under the Hashtag & Identity Campaign, generated a high level of interaction: 10.2K talks, 980 unique talkers, 2.2 million views, 2 million reach, and 8.4 million impressions. Prominent hashtags such as #ranxsalmasalsabil, #bungahatisalmasalsabil, and #rumahsalmasalsabil emerged as key elements in orchestrating collective conversations and reinforcing the community's digital identity. These strategies were implemented collectively by both national and regional fan accounts, reflecting a high degree of participation and digital solidarity and this study contributes to fan culture scholarship by highlighting the symbolic power and communication.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of fanbases in the entertainment industry has increasingly shown a significant role in shaping the popularity and visibility of artists, particularly in the digital era. With technological advancements and the growing use of social media, fans now have ample space to express their support collectively. They are no longer limited to consuming music or visual content; instead, they actively participate in digital activities that allow them to become part of their idol's career journey. The digital age enables fans to move from passive consumption to dynamic interaction. Social media plays a vital role in this transformation by blurring the boundaries between fandom producers and consumers, leading to new forms of cultural production and stronger fan cultures (Guo, 2022).

One of the most widely used platforms by fan communities is X (formerly Twitter). This text-based platform supports fast-paced interaction and offers features such as hashtags, which make it easier to search topics, unite conversations, and broaden message reach. Hashtag usage enhances social interaction by helping users follow specific topics and engage with related content (Ohanyerenwa & Clarke, 2017). These features create dynamic and interactive experiences, enabling fans to build more focused digital communities.

In this context, Salmine, the fanbase of Indonesian singer Salma Salsabil, has shown highly engaged and coordinated digital participation, particularly through the use of hashtags. Since Salma's rise to fame as a finalist in the 12th season of Indonesian Idol in 2023, Salmine has consistently used various hashtags to support her promotions and online presence. Popular hashtags include #BolehJugaSalmaSalsabil, #BungaHatiSalmaSalsabil, #SalmaSalsabilDiAMI Awards2024, #JamieMillerXSalmaSalsabil, #RANxSalmaSalsabil, and #RumahSalmaSalsabil. These hashtags appear in various contexts, such as new song releases, collaborations with other musicians, and national award campaigns.

The use of hashtags by Salmine is not incidental. It has become a part of routine communication practices performed collectively. During important moments involving Salma Salsabil, fan accounts such as @OfficialSalmine and their regional networks mobilize support by using specific hashtags. Several of these hashtags have even reached trending topic positions in Indonesia. This reflects how local fanbase practices have adopted strategic and structured mechanisms, similar to those seen in professional promotional agencies. Hashtag coordination is often accompanied by visual elements such as digital posters, content-sharing calls, and scheduled posting times. This shows that hashtags are not just technical markers. They have become symbols of identity and collective expression. In digital marketing, hashtags help connect conversations and increase the visibility of supported entities (Naraine et al., 2021). For fan communities, hashtags represent engagement, community cohesion, and continuously reproduced symbolic support.

Beyond the entertainment industry, global fanbases also use hashtags as tools for social participation and digital activism. For example, BTS ARMY used the hashtag #NoINDOMYatAirport as a form of collective protest that fostered affiliation, expression, and collaborative problem-solving (Zunaedi, 2025). Brazilian football fans used the hashtag #juninhonocorinthiansnao to protest decisions that did not reflect community values (Barbosa & Carvalho, 2023). During the COVID-19 pandemic, K-pop fans promoted public health movements through hashtags such as #WearAMask (Chang et al., 2023) and participated in social justice campaigns like #StopAsianHate (Regla-Vargas et al., 2023).

The evolving use of hashtags requires continuous academic attention. (Rocca and Artieri, 2022) emphasize the need to explore how hashtags serve as tools for social collaboration, identity construction, and digital community building. In the case of the Salmine fanbase, it is essential to examine how this community uses hashtags not only for

expression but also as a method of constructing meaningful collective discourse in digital spaces.

Based on this phenomenon, the present study focuses on the conversational themes constructed through hashtag usage in the Salmine community on X. By employing a netnographic approach and cultural engagement, this research aims to understand the symbolic dynamics within fanbase digital interactions. Unlike many existing studies that explore international fanbases, particularly in the K-pop sphere, this study brings attention to the underexplored local Indonesian context. Through the case of Salmine, this study seeks to contribute to fan culture literature by highlighting symbolic power, collective participation, and digital communication practices unique to Indonesian fan communities.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Fanbase

Fan communities, or fanbases, are groups of devoted and committed supporters who play a pivotal role in shaping and sustaining the success of a particular artist or group. These communities actively contribute to promotional efforts, particularly through social media platforms, by amplifying visibility and public engagement. Their involvement includes initiating hashtag campaigns, disseminating promotional content, and organizing community events that enhance the artist's presence in the digital space. As noted by Jenkins (2016), fanbases represent a collective power that can significantly influence an artist's image through consistent and coordinated support across various platforms. Beyond promotional functions, fan communities also cultivate interactive spaces that nurture closer emotional bonds between the artist and their audience. This, in turn, fosters stronger loyalty and long-term engagement. (Reichenberger & Smith, 2020) further explains that fanbases often emerge from shared interests, helping to construct a sense of belonging and collective identity among members.

2.2. Digital Fan Culture

Digital fan culture refers to the phenomenon of fan interactions that occur primarily in virtual spaces, particularly through social media platforms. This culture enables fans to collaborate, share content, and form communities rooted in a shared admiration for a particular artist. According to (Hills and Black, 2021), platforms such as Twitter and Instagram have become key arenas where fans actively participate in activities like promotion, discussion, and organized campaigns to support their favorite artists. These platforms also provide fans with direct access to artists through interactive features such as comments and live Q&A sessions. Furthermore, digital fan culture empowers audiences to shape public perception by disseminating positive narratives or coordinating collective critiques (Sandvoss, 2021). These dynamics illustrate how digital communities not only foster strong affective bonds with artists but also play a significant role in influencing their public image and career trajectory.

2.3 Social Media

According to (Bungin, 2008), social media represents the most powerful platform for social processes and interaction within cybercommunities. It is characterized by its independence, freedom, egalitarian nature, ease of use, and simple technological features, all of which contribute to its widespread popularity as a medium for social engagement in virtual spaces. In the context of the entertainment industry, social media plays a critical role in shaping an artist's image and sustaining fan loyalty. Supporting this perspective, (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010) assert that social media offers artists a personalized platform for engaging with fans, which ultimately strengthens both their brand image and fan commitment. Further emphasizing this dynamic, (Hutchins, 2020) notes that social media facilitates more intense

and emotionally resonant interactions between fans and artists compared to traditional media, thereby fostering deeper fan-artist connections.

2.4 Computer Mediated Communication (CMC)

Advancements in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have introduced new modes of human interaction, commonly referred to as Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) (Sulianta, 2021). The digital era has significantly transformed traditional communication patterns, enabling broader social engagement and connectivity. This transformation not only alters how individuals interact but also reshapes the formation of identity, social cohesion, and interpersonal relationships. It underscores the transformative potential of technology-mediated communication on the fabric of modern social life (Sharmila et al., 2024). The forms of technologically mediated communication include a range of platforms and media such as instant messaging, email, chat rooms, online forums, social media, and other text-based interactions, including short message services (Thurlow et al., 2004).

3. METHOD

This study employed netnography, a method developed by (Kozinets, 2020), to explore the symbolic and communicative practices within the Salmine fanbase community on the social media platform X. Netnography was chosen due to its capacity to observe digital interactions in a naturalistic manner without disrupting the dynamics of the community, while also enabling the researcher to interpret digital culture through cultural engagement. The research focused on identifying symbols, keywords, hashtags, and narratives that emerged from the fanbase's digital footprints. The methodological process included immersive observation, digital content documentation, and a pre-research interview with the national coordinator of the Salmine fanbase. To enhance data accuracy, the collection of digital data was supported by a crawling technique using the NoLimit Dashboard, which systematically mapped conversations and interactions based on selected keywords and hashtags.

The study adopted a qualitative approach grounded in a constructivist paradigm, viewing reality as a socially constructed phenomenon shaped through interaction and shared experiences. The research object was centered on conversations, hashtags, and symbolic elements used by the Salmine community within the digital space, particularly on platform X. Object assessment was guided by immersion notes and pre-research interviews and included fanbase segments such as Salmine, Salnas, Salmine Nasional, Salreg, Salmine Regional, Salmine Creators, Salmastreams, Streamine, Arek Salma, Salvoting, Salmachartdata, Forthesal, ZuppaSoupMine, as well as prominent hashtags such as #MenghargaiKataRinduSalma, #BungaHatiSalmaSalsabil, #RumahSalmaSalsabil, #BolehJugaSalmaSalsabil, #AffalyahSalmaSalsabil, and #RANxSalmaSalsabil. These keywords were selected to narrow and contextualize the collected data in accordance with the patterns of digital interaction within the Salmine fan community.

The data collection was conducted online during the period of October to December 2024. This specific timeframe was chosen based on the researcher's immersion journal and preliminary observations with the fanbase coordinator, which indicated a marked increase in digital activity during the final quarter of the year. The surge in fanbase engagement coincided with several key events in Salma Salsabil's music career, particularly her nominations in major national award shows. These developments prompted heightened participation in online voting campaigns, creating a dynamic communicative environment among fanbase members. This rise in digital activity not only reflected collective fan support but also highlighted the organic emergence of communication strategies and solidarity in the context of public competition.

The data obtained in this netnographic study were not only collected but also further processed to explore the underlying meanings and cultural patterns emerging from social media user behavior. According to Eriyanto (2019), one of the common analytical techniques used in netnographic research is thematic analysis, as developed by Braun and Clarke (2021). As the name suggests, thematic analysis is a method that focuses on identifying and constructing key themes or topics that emerge from the data. These themes are generated through a systematic process of classifying and organizing the data, enabling researchers to uncover hidden patterns of meaning behind the conversations or interactions occurring within digital spaces.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The use of hashtags has become a key element in the digital activities of the Salmine fanbase on the social media platform X. As a tool for collective communication, hashtags enable fans to connect, participate, and express their support simultaneously. The presence of hashtags creates a participatory space that unites community members and reinforces the collective identity of fans. In this context, hashtag usage represents not only a form of expression but also a structured and recurring strategy of participation in supporting their favorite artist. Based on findings from the NoLimit Dashboard, which crawled data using an object assessment approach, the digital activity of the Salmine fanbase is characterized by intensity and coordination. The resulting online conversations reflect a consistent pattern of collective engagement, demonstrated through various forms of support such as hashtag usage, visual content sharing, and digital campaign initiatives that strengthen community solidarity.

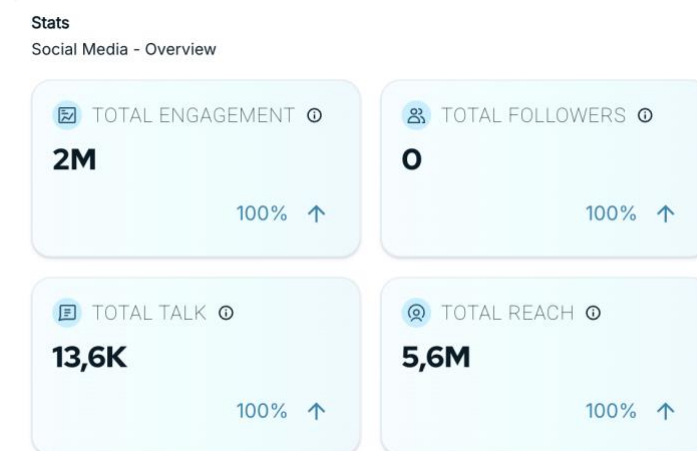


Figure 1. X Statistics Overview
(Source: NoLimit Dashboard)

The image above illustrates the high level of digital engagement demonstrated by the Salmine fanbase community in various online activities on the social media platform X. During the monitoring period, total engagement reached 2 million, encompassing interactions such as likes, retweets, and comments across multiple posts related to Salma Salsabil. The number of digital conversations (total talk) was also notably high, with 13,600 instances reflecting the enthusiasm of fans in responding to and disseminating content associated with their idol. Moreover, the reach of this digital campaign was substantial, amounting to 5.6 million,

indicating the broad audience exposed to the messages circulated by the community. It is important to note that the zero followers displayed in the dashboard does not reflect a lack of followers, but rather results from the analytical focus on content, hashtags, and keywords instead of specific social media accounts. Based on the big data findings above, the researcher conducted a thematic analysis following the approach of [Braun and Clarke \(2021\)](#). This study successfully identified four major themes that represent the forms of digital engagement within the fan community of Salma Salsabil. The following are the findings of the four key themes that emerged from conversations related to the Salma Salsabil fanbase.

No	Group	Talk	Talker	View	Reach	Impression
1.	Hashtag & Identity Campaign	10,2K	980	2,2M	2M	8,4M
2.	Voting & Awards Campaign	493	213	563K	186,4K	615,5K
3	Content Creation Campaign	383	143	1,8M	196,2K	459,8K
4.	Streaming Campaign	212	100	230K	699,5K	1,4M

(Source: Adapted from NoLimit Dashboard, 2025)

The data shows the digital performance of four major themes within the Salma Salsabil fanbase's online engagement. The Hashtag & Identity Campaign stands out as the most dominant, generating 10.2K talks with 980 unique talkers. This theme also recorded the highest view count at 2.2 million, a reach of 2 million, and an impressive 8.4 million impressions. These figures indicate that hashtag-based campaigns are the primary driver of conversations and visibility for the fan community.

In comparison, the Voting & Awards Campaign generated 493 talks with 213 talkers, followed by the Content Creation Campaign with 383 talks and 143 talkers, and the Streaming Campaign with 212 talks and 100 talkers. Despite lower engagement in terms of talks, the Content Creation Campaign achieved a notable 1.8 million views, showing its potential for visibility. Meanwhile, the Streaming Campaign, although the smallest in talks and talkers, recorded 699.5K reach and 1.4 million impressions, suggesting its role in supporting fan efforts through streaming activities. Overall, these findings illustrate the diverse yet coordinated forms of digital engagement within the Salmine community.

Following a thematic analysis based on the approach proposed by [Braun and Clarke \(2021\)](#), the researcher identified one consistently recurring category: Hashtag and Identity Campaign. This category highlights how hashtags are utilized by the Salmine fanbase not merely as decorative elements in posts but as expressions of collective identity and strategic tools for coordinated digital communication. Prominent hashtags identified include #MenghargaiKataRinduSalma, #BungaHatiSalmaSalsabil, #RumahSalmaSalsabil, #BolehJugaSalmaSalsabil, and #RANxSalmaSalsabil. These hashtags function as symbols of solidarity, platforms for expressing support, and promotional tools that help extend the reach of Salma's music to broader audiences.

The strength of this campaign is reflected in quantitative data from the Advanced Metrics feature of the NoLimit Dashboard. Under the Hashtag and Identity Campaign theme, Salmine's digital performance reached 10.2K talks with 980 unique talkers, 2.2 million views, 2 million reach, and 8.4 million impressions. These numbers illustrate the significant exposure and engagement generated by the community. Thematic analysis further revealed four key themes dominating Salmine's conversations, with the most prominent being the strategic use of hashtags to build collective identity and mobilize digital support for Salma Salsabil. These findings demonstrate that Salmine's hashtag campaigns are not only well-organized but also effective in shaping structured conversations and strengthening their digital presence. To further substantiate this narrative, selected excerpts from fan posts are presented, illustrating how hashtags serve as emotional and communal tools for expressing their support for Salma.

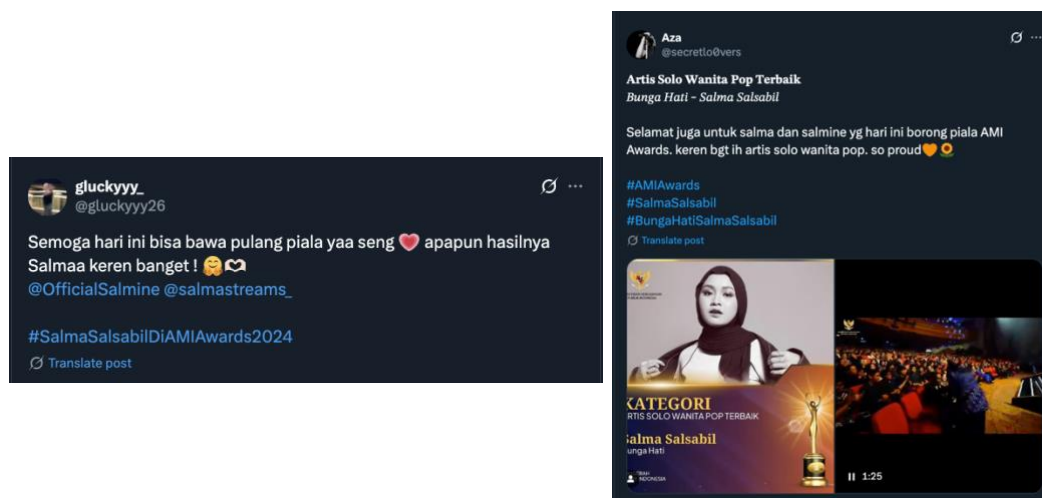


Figure 2. The fanbase account posts used the hashtags #SalmaSalsabilAtAMI Awards2024, #BungaHatiSalmaSalsabil, and #SalmaSalsabil
(Source: X Account @gluckyyy_ & @secretlo0vers, 2025)

The image above shows two social media posts expressing support for Salma Salsabil at Indonesia's most prestigious music award event, the Anugerah Musik Indonesia (AMI) Awards 2024. The first tweet, posted by the account @gluckyyy_, conveys hope that Salma would win a trophy and includes the hashtag #SalmaSalsabilDiAMI Awards2024 to show support. The second tweet, shared by @secretlo0vers, congratulates both Salma and her fanbase, Salmine, for her victory in the Best Female Pop Solo Artist category. It includes hashtags such as #AMI Awards, #SalmaSalsabil, and #BungaHatiSalmaSalsabil, reinforcing the collective identity of the fan community. These tweets reflect a deep sense of pride and enthusiasm from fans regarding Salma's accomplishment. The use of hashtags and congratulatory messages illustrates how digital expressions play a vital role in uniting fans and amplifying their support in a public and organized manner.

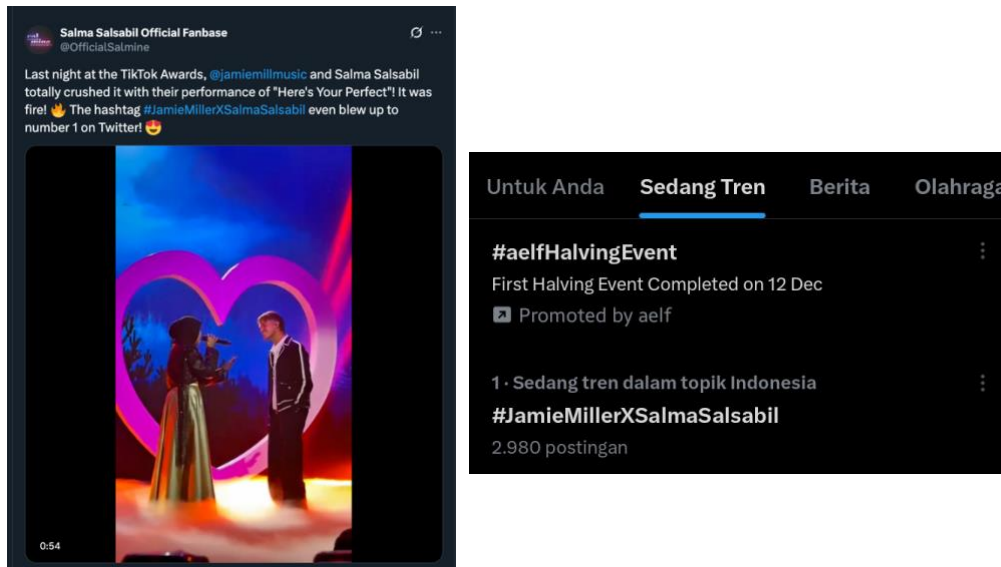


Figure 3. A post by Salmine Fanbase using the hashtag #JamieMillerXSalmaSalsabil & Its Hashtag Trending on X
(Source: X Account @OfficialSalmine, 2025)

The image above displays a post shared by @OfficialSalmine, the official fanbase account of Salma Salsabil, celebrating her collaborative performance with @jamiemillmusic at the TikTok Awards. In the tweet, the fanbase expresses appreciation for their captivating rendition of the song "Here's Your Perfect." The use of the hashtag #JamieMillerXSalmaSalsabil effectively garnered widespread attention, ultimately leading the hashtag to become the number one trending topic in Indonesia, as recorded in the Trending section of the social media platform X.



Figure 4. A Post by a Regional Salmine Fanbase Account Using the Hashtag #BolehJugaSalmaSalsabil
(Source: X Account @SalMineMakassar & @SalmineSemarang, 2025)

The image above displays two tweets from regional Salmine fanbase accounts, both using the hashtag #BolehJugaSalmaSalsabil to express support for Salma Salsabil's song "Boleh Juga." The first tweet, shared by @SalMineMakassar, celebrates the achievement of

41 million streams on Spotify and encourages fans to continue listening. Meanwhile, the second tweet, posted by @SalmineSemarang, invites fans to vote for the song as part of the *Waktu Indonesia Bahagia* playlist in Spotify Wrapped 2024 and provides details about the voting period. These examples illustrate that hashtags used by the Salmine fanbase are more than just celebratory tools. They also function as powerful symbols that connect fans within a shared digital movement. Rather than being isolated expressions, these hashtags are part of a well-organized strategy that amplifies reach, reinforces collective identity, and strengthens community cohesion during key moments related to the artist.

Furthermore, the consistent and strategic application of hashtags suggests that they serve as meaningful digital instruments for mobilizing support and articulating shared values. This observation is consistent with the findings of (Agustya et al., 2023), who argue that hashtags foster social interaction and contribute to the formation of virtual communities based on shared narratives and experiences. Within the Salmine fanbase, hashtags create a participatory environment where fans are not only supporters but also active contributors to the community's collective voice.

The effectiveness of hashtag use within the Salmine campaign supports the perspective of (Devi et al., 2020), who emphasize the role of algorithms in determining the trending potential of a hashtag. In contrast, the case of Salmine reveals that it is the strength and initiative of the community that becomes the primary driver. Instead of relying solely on algorithmic automation, the fanbase actively organizes narratives, schedules content dissemination, and selects relevant keywords to increase visibility.

This strategic use of hashtags aligns with the findings of (Chakrabarti et al. 2023), which highlight the importance of hashtags in digital marketing campaigns. Salmine's efforts show how hashtags not only increase an artist's visibility but also help build momentum for promotional activities through organic and collective engagement. When fan coordination is well-managed, it enables a campaign to expand its reach and impact beyond its original scope. The shift from passive consumption to active participation among fans is further explored by (Guo, 2022), who explains that social media has cultivated a new participatory culture within fandoms. In this context, Salmine is not only a supporter community but also a cultural producer that crafts meanings, shapes narratives, and strengthens Salma Salsabil's digital identity. This perspective is consistent with the study by (Nugraha and Komsiah, 2023), which discusses how Twitter functions as a site of fan-based cultural production. Through coordinated hashtag campaigns, Salmine has succeeded in building a unified identity and extending its network of support through regional fan accounts.

Moreover, the measurable nature of digital fan engagement, as discussed by (Zhang, 2024), demonstrates how online behaviors such as likes, shares, and discussions can serve as tangible indicators of community dynamics. Data gathered from tools like the NoLimit Dashboard confirms that these forms of engagement reflect more than just temporary interactions; they represent sustained collective action.

Finally, this research contributes new insight by highlighting a locally rooted case study. While much of the literature on digital fandom focuses on global or Western contexts, the Salmine fanbase illustrates that Indonesian fans are equally adept at managing organized and impactful digital campaigns. These findings reinforce (McMahon and Templeton's, 2024) argument that fan communities grow from shared values and collective identities. Salmine exemplifies how these dynamics are actively cultivated within a localized digital environment.

5. CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the use of hashtags within the Salmine fanbase community has developed beyond a digital strategy. It has become a form of symbolic communication that strengthens the collective identity of Salma Salsabil's supporters on the social media platform X. Hashtags such as #BungaHatiSalmaSalsabil, #RANxSalmaSalsabil, and #BolehJugaSalmaSalsabil serve as unifying tools that not only express support but also reflect emotional engagement and community solidarity. This is evident from the high levels of digital interaction recorded through the NoLimit Dashboard, which demonstrate the success of strategically coordinated campaigns led by both national and regional fan accounts.

In addition, by applying netnographic methods, this study captures the digital cultural dynamics of a local fanbase that has received limited attention in academic research. The findings indicate that fan communities in Indonesia are also capable of constructing strong participatory spaces. Just like international fanbases, they use hashtags to enhance visibility, distribute collective narratives, and build identity and solidarity within digital communities. In this context, social media, particularly X, functions as a primary space where fans can actively and meaningfully support their idols.

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