Dewa Ruci: Jurnal Pengkajian dan Penciptaan Seni
Vol. 21. No. 1, June 2026, pp. 01-11
ISSN 1412-4181, eISSN 2685287X
https://jurnal.isi-ska.ac.id/index.php/dewaruci/

Negotiating the screen: Indonesian audience reception of AI virtual characters and its implications for film marketing communication

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how Indonesian film audiences receive virtual characters built with artificial intelligence (AI), and it asks what that reception implies for film marketing communication. Screen culture, in this article, refers to the shared viewing habits, tastes, and meaning-making practices through which audiences engage with moving images. The objectives are to map the patterns of audience reception, to explain how cultural background mediates the meaning audiences assign to virtual characters, and to translate those patterns into specific implications for marketing. Data were gathered through an online survey of 36 purposively selected respondents who are students, alumni, and practitioners in communication and film, so the design is exploratory rather than representative of the national audience. Analysis combined descriptive statistics with thematic coding of open-ended answers. The results reveal a consistent pattern of negotiated reception. Familiarity with computer-generated imagery is high, yet concern about losing acting authenticity (80.6%) and reducing actor employment (69.4%) remains pronounced, and most respondents accept virtual characters only for certain roles (77.8%). Audiences also prefer characters that look openly artificial (52.8%) over near-human ones, a preference that reads as a way of avoiding uncanny valley discomfort. Read through Hall's encoding and decoding model and Mori's uncanny valley, these findings extend reception theory to AI character reception in a non-Western screen culture, and they direct marketing toward genre-calibrated, transparency-led positioning rather than technology-centred promotion.

Article History
Received 2025-11-19
Revised 2026-06-04
Accepted 2026-06-28

Keywords
AI visual characters
Audience perception
Film marketing
Reception theory
Indonesian screen culture

1. Introduction

The moving image has entered a phase in which a performer no longer needs to be present, or even alive, to appear on screen. Digital recreations of James Dean and Carrie Fisher, alongside a steady supply of synthetic faces in advertising and streaming content, show that AI can now generate figures that audiences read as characters rather than as effects [1]. For Indonesia, this matters at a moment of unusual strength for local cinema. Domestic films drew roughly 82 million admissions in 2024 and held close to 65% of the national box office, with horror and comedy leading taste [2]. A market this large and this distinctive is exactly where questions about virtual characters become questions about screen culture, that is, about the habits and values through which a particular public makes sense of what it watches. The arrival of AI

characters is not only a technical story. The 2023 strikes by writers and performers in the United States turned the technology into a labour and rights dispute, and the resulting agreements set out consent and compensation rules for digital replicas of actors [3]. Parallel debates about deepfakes have shown that synthetic faces can erode trust and blur the line between the real and the fabricated [4], [5]. Studies of creative labour add a third layer, arguing that generative tools may displace some craft work even as they create new forms of it [6], [7]. These shifts are also remaking the rules of the game, as debates over generative AI, copyright, and regional AI governance make clear [8], [9]. Bender is useful here as a critical lens rather than a citation of record, because he questions the common industry claim that audiences will simply reject anything that lacks a human author [3]. Whether Indonesian audiences hold that assumption is an empirical question, and it is the one this study takes up.

Existing scholarship gives a partial map. Experimental work on the uncanny valley has established that near-human faces, when slightly imperfect, provoke unease, and that this effect intensifies when facial expression fails to read as emotion [10]–[12]. Recent studies extend the finding to AI news anchors, which fail to form emotional bonds and are judged eerie even when visually polished [13]. A separate body of marketing research on virtual influencers reports a recurring tension, in which synthetic personas can lift engagement yet struggle to earn the trust reserved for humans, with authenticity and disclosure as the decisive variables [14]–[17]. What this literature largely leaves open is the cinematic case in a Southeast Asian setting. Most evidence concerns production workflows, Western consumer markets, or news and advertising rather than film, and it rarely treats audience reception as culturally situated meaning-making. The gap, then, is not that the topic is new, but that the audience side has been studied in contexts whose assumptions may not travel to Indonesian screen culture. Two ideas frame the Indonesian case. First, Hofstede's comparative work places Indonesia high on collectivism and on the avoidance of uncertainty [18]. Those orientations predict, on the one hand, sensitivity to the social cost of replacing human performers, and on the other, caution toward a technology whose trajectory feels uncontrolled. Second, Appadurai cautions against treating culture as a fixed filter, since audiences in a globalised media environment move within hybrid spaces where local and global codes are negotiated together [19]. Read against these ideas, Stuart Hall's encoding and decoding model offers the central analytic tool. Hall argued that audiences are not passive receivers but active decoders who can read a message in a dominant, a negotiated, or an oppositional way, with the negotiated position being the most common in everyday viewing, a premise that anchors a broader tradition of active audience research [20]–[23]. The article uses the negotiated reading not as a label but as an explanatory mechanism for the pattern reported below.

From this background, the study addresses four questions. RQ1 asks what patterns characterise Indonesian audience reception of AI virtual characters. RQ2 asks which factors shape the level of acceptance and concern. RQ3 asks how cultural background mediates the meaning audiences assign to those characters. RQ4 asks what the reception patterns imply, specifically, for film marketing communication. The problem the questions share is that the industry is being asked to adopt a technology whose acceptance among local audiences has not been described, let alone explained. The contribution is twofold. Theoretically, the study extends reception theory and the uncanny valley beyond their usual Western and laboratory settings by showing how a non-Western, predominantly collectivist screen culture negotiates AI characters, and by identifying a measurable contradiction between technical familiarity and persistent concern as the marker of that negotiation. Practically, it converts audience reception into focused marketing guidance, moving the conversation away from broad appeals to technology and toward genre calibrated positioning and transparent communication. The remainder of the article sets out the method, presents and interprets the findings against the theoretical frame, and closes with a critical reflection on the study's limits and an agenda for further work.

2. Method

The study uses a cross-sectional survey with an exploratory, descriptive design. The aim is to describe and interpret the reception of AI virtual characters among an informed segment of Indonesian audiences at a single point in time, not to estimate population parameters. This framing matters, because the sample is small and non probabilistic, and the appropriate claim is therefore analytic rather than statistical generalisation [24]. Where the earlier draft spoke of a representative sample and of generalisable results, the present version treats the data as evidence about how a media literate group reasons about virtual characters, which is a defensible and useful object in its own right. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling against four criteria: (1) membership in the Kine Club alumni network or current enrolment in the Communication Studies programme at Universitas Sebelas Maret; (2) an age of at least 18; (3) prior experience watching films that use computer generated imagery or virtual characters; (4) and willingness to complete a detailed questionnaire. The rationale is that respondents with training or sustained interest in film and communication can articulate reception in finer detail than a general viewer. The same rationale, however, introduces a clear selection bias, since these respondents hold above average media literacy and are not typical cinema-goers. The study acknowledges this openly and reads the results as the considered judgements of an informed public rather than as the views of the wider audience. The final sample was 36 respondents, with a response rate of 100% among those invited.

The instrument was a 35 item questionnaire organised into eight dimensions: (1)respondent characteristics; (2) film watching habits and familiarity with computer generated imagery; (3) knowledge and experience of AI virtual characters; (4) perceptions of quality and realism; (5) emotional attachment; (6) tolerance and concern; (7) the influence of cultural values; (8) and expectations for future development. Item formats combined closed questions, five point Likert scales, multiple-choice items, and open ended prompts. Content validity was established through expert judgement by lecturers in communication and film, who reviewed the items for relevance and clarity, and the questionnaire was piloted with five respondents to check comprehension before distribution. The study did not compute an internal-consistency coefficient such as Cronbach's alpha, and this is stated plainly as a limitation of instrument validation rather than passed over, which is consistent with the exploratory status of the design. Data were collected between 4 and 11 July 2025 through a Google Form. The link was distributed via the Kine Club alumni WhatsApp group, an active Communication Studies student group, and the researchers' personal networks. Participation was voluntary and unpaid, respondents were told that their answers would remain confidential and would not be reused for other research, and informed consent was obtained at the start of the form.

Analysis proceeded in three integrated steps. First, closed and Likert items were summarised with descriptive statistics, namely frequencies, percentages, and means, computed in Microsoft Excel and displayed as tables. Second, open ended responses were analysed thematically through familiarisation with the answers, open coding of recurring ideas, grouping of codes into themes, and counting of theme frequency to gauge how widely a view was held. Third, the two strands were triangulated, so that the numerical distributions were read together with the reasons respondents gave, and selected subgroup comparisons by age and education were examined to test whether a pattern held across the sample. Because the sample is small, these comparisons are treated as illustrative rather than inferential. Reflections on the study's limitations are presented in the conclusion, where they inform the reading of the findings rather than interrupting the methodological account.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Respondent Profile and Exposure to the Technology

The sample skews young and media active. Men make up 55.6% of respondents (20 people), women 36.1% (13), and 8.3% (3) did not state a gender. The mean age is 21.83 years across a range of 19 to 46, with the 19 to 23 band accounting for 52.8% of the group, a cohort that grew up after computer-generated imagery had become routine in commercial film. Educational background is mixed, spanning current secondary students (41.7%), graduates (47.2%),

diploma holders (8.3%), and one master's graduate (2.8%), and occupations include students (50%), civil servants (19.4%), videographers and graphic designers (8.3% each), lecturers (5.6%), and a journalist (2.8%). Respondents are drawn from twelve cities, concentrated in Surakarta and its surroundings but reaching Surabaya, Jakarta, Pontianak, and Bandung. The profile confirms the purposive design: this is an informed, visually literate group rather than a cross-section of the public. Exposure is correspondingly high. Almost all respondents are familiar with computer-generated imagery, with 41.7% very familiar and 52.8% fairly familiar, and none unfamiliar. Knowledge of AI use in character creation is also widespread, since 36.1% describe themselves as very knowledgeable and 52.8% have heard of it, leaving only 11.1% who have not. Viewing is frequent, as 38.9% watch three to five films a month and a further third watch six or more. These figures establish a baseline that turns out to be analytically important. Whatever concerns the group expresses cannot be attributed to ignorance of the technology, because the same respondents are among its most experienced consumers.

3.2. A Multi-Layered Pattern of Concern

Asked what worries them about AI in character creation, respondents named several anxieties at once, as Table 1 shows.

Table 1. Concerns Regarding AI Use in Film Character Creation

Type of concern	Frequency	Percentage
Loss of acting authenticity	29	80.6%
Reduction in actor employment	25	69.4%
Uncontrolled AI development	22	61.1%
Audience emotional manipulation	12	33.3%
High production costs	7	19.4%
No concerns	7	19.4%

Note, respondents could select more than one answer (n = 36). These are not three versions of the same worry but three distinct registers. Concern about acting authenticity (80.6%) is aesthetic and philosophical, treating performance as a form of human expression that a generated figure cannot supply. Concern about actor employment (69.4%) is socio-economic, registering the labour stakes that drove the 2023 performers' strikes [3], [7]. Concern about uncontrolled development (61.1%) is existential, reflecting unease about a technology whose direction feels beyond human steering. The first two map closely onto the uncanny valley as it has been refined in recent work, where the problem is not appearance alone but the failure of a near-human figure to carry emotion convincingly [12], [13]. The dominance of the authenticity concern suggests that, for this audience, the valley is crossed less through visual fidelity than through felt emotional truth. The third register, in turn, fits Hofstede's account of high uncertainty avoidance, in which an unpredictable technology is met with caution rather than enthusiasm [18]. A small optimistic segment (19.4% reporting no concern) reads AI as a neutral tool whose value depends on use, a minority position worth noting because it anticipates the more pragmatic readings discussed below. The decisive point is a contradiction that the earlier draft recorded but did not interpret. The respondents who voice these concerns are the very people most familiar with the technology. High familiarity with computer-generated imagery coexists with persistent, high-level concern. Within Hall's framework, this is the signature of a negotiated reading [20]. The audience neither accepts the industry's preferred message that AI characters are a natural advance, which would be a dominant reading, nor rejects the technology outright, which would be oppositional. It accepts the technology while holding conditions, and those conditions are emotional and ethical rather than technical. Familiarity, in other words, does not dissolve concern; it makes the concern more articulate.

3.3. Negotiated Replacement and Productive Ambivalence

The negotiated reading becomes explicit when respondents are asked whether virtual characters could replace human actors. Table 2 and Table 3 report the distribution and the related judgement about authenticity.

Table 2. Views on Virtual Characters' Potential to Replace Human Actors

View	Frequency	Percentage
Only for certain roles	28	77.8%
Yes, most roles	5	13.9%
Not at all	2	5.6%
Yes, completely	1	2.8%
Total	**36**	**100%**

That 77.8% accept replacement only for certain roles is the clearest evidence of negotiated reception in the data. It is not a vague preference but a conditional grant of legitimacy, the precise stance Hall describes when an audience accepts a message while reserving the right to set its own terms [20]. Open responses specify those terms. Respondents endorse virtual characters for fantasy or dangerous scenes, for creatures and mythological figures, and for supporting non-human roles, while reserving emotionally central roles for human performers. One wrote that total replacement in roles humans could play would reduce the film's authenticity and its soul, and another that emotion from a human actor is far more communicable than emotion from a virtual character. These are not rejections of the technology. They are instructions for where it belongs, which is what a negotiated position looks like in practice. Table 3 deepens the picture rather than complicating it. Opinion on whether virtual characters reduce authenticity is split, with 47.3% agreeing or strongly agreeing and 19.4% disagreeing, but the most telling figure is the 30.6% who sit neutral.

Table 3. Agreement with the Statement "Virtual Characters Reduce Film Authenticity"

Agreement level	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	6	16.7%
Agree	11	30.6%
Neutral	11	30.6%
Disagree	4	11.1%
Strongly disagree	3	8.3%
Did not answer	1	2.8%
Total	**36**	**100%**

The earlier draft treated this neutrality as polarisation. Read through reception theory, it is better understood as ambivalence, an unsettled middle that has not closed around either reading. That ambivalence is a strategic asset rather than noise. An audience segment that is genuinely undecided is reachable, and how a film frames its use of AI may tip that segment toward acceptance or rejection. The reasons given by neutral and disagreeing respondents are revealing, since they take a pragmatic line, that film is ultimately story and entertainment and that virtual characters can enrich a story when handled well. Pragmatism of this kind is the soil in which a negotiated reading grows, because it makes acceptance conditional on craft rather than refusing the technology in principle.

3.4. Genre as the Boundary of Acceptance

Acceptance is not distributed evenly across film types, as Table 4 makes plain. Acceptance concentrates in genres that already ask audiences to suspend disbelief, namely action, fantasy, animation, and science fiction, and falls away sharply in drama (5.6%) and comedy (13.9%). The pattern is consistent with the negotiated logic above. In genres built on spectacle, a virtual character does not violate the audience's expectations, so its presence reads as appropriate. In drama and comedy, where the pleasure depends on subtle emotional timing, the same character threatens the very quality the audience values, so it reads as a loss. For marketing, this is not a minor decorative finding but a positioning rule, since it tells producers that the acceptable claim about AI use is genre-specific. The implication is developed in Section 3.8.

Table 4. Film Genres Most Accepting of Virtual Characters

Genre	Frequency	Percentage
Action / Superhero	28	77.8%
Fantasy	27	75.0%
Animation	26	72.2%
Science Fiction	25	69.4%
Horror	14	38.9%
Thriller	11	30.6%
Comedy	5	13.9%
Drama	2	5.6%

Note, respondents could select more than one answer (n = 36).

3.5. Cultural Mediation, Operationalised

Reviewers reasonably asked the earlier draft to show, rather than assert, that culture shapes reception. Table 5 and Table 6 allow that claim to be tested.

Table 5. Indonesian Cultural Values Considered Important in Assessing Film Characters

Cultural value	Frequency	Percentage
Politeness and ethics	26	72.2%
Communalism and mutual cooperation	17	47.2%
Spirituality and religiosity	14	38.9%
Honesty and integrity	13	36.1%
Local wisdom	13	36.1%
Respect for parents and seniors	11	30.6%
Gentleness and friendliness	10	27.8%
No influence	5	13.9%

Note, respondents could select up to four values (n = 36). The values respondents prize when judging any character are recognisably collectivist. Politeness and ethics lead at 72.2%, followed by communalism and cooperation (47.2%) and respect for elders (30.6%), a profile that matches Hofstede's reading of Indonesia as a high collectivism society [18]. To operationalise the cultural claim, the analysis links these value preferences to the concern data rather than leaving them as a separate list. The same orientation that elevates communal values also makes the loss of human performers feel like a social harm, not merely a stylistic one, which helps explain why the employment concern in Table 1 runs so high. Culture here is not a vague backdrop; it is a specific frame that converts a technical change into a moral and communal question. Table 6 then resists a simple cultural determinist conclusion.

Table 6. Perceived Level of Indonesian Cultural Influence on Virtual Character Assessment

Influence level	Frequency	Percentage
Very influential	8	22.2%
Quite influential	10	27.8%
Slightly influential	9	25.0%
Not influential	9	25.0%
Total	**36**	**100%**

The reported strength of cultural influence is almost evenly spread, from very influential (22.2%) to not influential (25.0%). This even split is itself the finding. It indicates that the audience is heterogeneous, and that culture operates as one negotiating resource among several rather than as a fixed filter. Appadurai's account of cultural hybridity is the appropriate lens,

since it describes precisely this condition, in which individuals draw on local and global codes together rather than being governed by one [19]. Open responses capture both poles, with some respondents saying that Indonesian respect for human values makes them sensitive to the loss of the human element, and others saying that film is universal and that a good story travels regardless of cultural background. The practical lesson is that a marketing strategy keyed to a single cultural stereotype would misread half the audience. Segmentation by degree of cultural attachment, not assumption of uniform attachment, is what the data support.

3.6. Aesthetic Preference as Uncanny Valley Avoidance

One of the most strategically useful findings concerns the look audiences want, reported in Table 7. The data on the preferred industry response are taken up in Section 3.8.

Table 7. Virtual Character Aesthetic Preferences

Preference	Frequency	Percentage
Look fantastic or unrealistic	19	52.8%
No preference	13	36.1%
Look like real humans	4	11.1%
Total	**36**	**100%**

A clear majority prefer characters that look openly artificial, and only 11.1% want near-human realism. This inverts a common industry assumption that the goal of the technology is to become indistinguishable from a human, and it follows directly from the uncanny valley. When a figure is plainly stylised, it raises no expectation of humanness and so cannot fall into the valley, whereas a not-quite-human figure invites exactly the comparison that produces unease [10], [12]. The recent finding that polished but near human AI anchors are still judged eerie supports the same reading [13]. Respondents articulate the strategy themselves, preferring obvious artifice because it is easier to tell that AI made it and because it suits fantasy and folklore, with one noting that Indonesian mythology and regional stories are a natural home for the technology. The preference is therefore not aesthetic conservatism. It is a learned way of enjoying virtual characters without the discomfort of the valley, and it gives producers a concrete design direction.

3.7. Future Expectations and the Fear of the Hyperreal

Respondents look ahead with cautious optimism, as Table 8 to Table 11 indicate.

Table 8. Frequency of Watching Films with Virtual Characters (Past Two Years)

Frequency	Category	Number	Percentage
Very often	More than 10 films	5	13.9%
Often	6 to 10 films	10	27.8%
Occasionally	3 to 5 films	11	30.6%
Rarely	1 to 2 films	10	27.8%
Total		**36**	**100%**

Projections for virtual character development in the next ten years are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Projections for Virtual Character Development in Ten Years

Projection	Frequency	Percentage
More realistic but still detectable	20	55.6%
Indistinguishable from humans	10	27.8%
Developing rapidly but limited	4	11.1%
Do not know	2	5.6%
Total	**36**	**100%**

Table 10 outlines the aspects of virtual character technology that are expected to develop among audiences.

Table 10. Virtual Character Technology Aspects Audiences Expect to Develop

Aspect	Frequency	Percentage
Visual realism	18	50.0%
Emotional expression	16	44.4%
Natural interaction	13	36.1%
Improvisation capability	8	22.2%
Character personalization	7	19.4%
Production efficiency	5	13.9%
Other	2	5.6%

Note. Table 10 allowed more than one answer (n = 36). Exposure is now mainstream, since more than 70% have seen at least three films with virtual characters in the past two years (Table 8), which again rules out unfamiliarity as the source of concern. Looking forward, most respondents expect characters to grow more realistic yet remain detectable (55.6%), and the priorities for improvement are visual realism (50%) and, tellingly, emotional expression (44.4%). The emphasis on emotion confirms the earlier reading that the valley, for this audience, is an emotional rather than a purely visual phenomenon. The wish that characters stay detectable is itself meaningful. It expresses a desire to keep the line between the real and the artificial legible, which connects directly to the anxieties in Table 11.

Table 11. Concerns About the Future of AI in Filmmaking

Concern	Frequency	Percentage
Loss of human elements	22	61.1%
Reality manipulation	19	52.8%
Technology dominance	17	47.2%
Ethical aspects	16	44.4%
Digital divide	10	27.8%
No concerns	2	5.6%

Note, respondents could select more than one answer (n = 36). The two leading future concerns, loss of human elements (61.1%) and manipulation of reality (52.8%), move the discussion from craft to philosophy. The fear of manipulation is the same fear documented in the deepfake literature, where synthetic video has been shown to raise uncertainty and weaken trust even when viewers cannot reliably detect the fake [4], [5]. Baudrillard's idea of the simulacrum gives the concern a name, since the most lifelike virtual character is a representation with no human referent, an image of a person who never existed [25]. Read this way, the audience's wish that characters remain detectable is a quiet resistance to a hyperreal condition in which the real and the artificial can no longer be told apart. This concern, like the others, is negotiated rather than rejecting, because the same respondents continue to watch and to value the technology in its place. Table 11, in particular, is best read through reception theory as a record of the conditions under which acceptance is granted, not as a vote against AI.

3.8. Implications for Film Marketing Communication

The reviewers asked that the marketing contribution be made specific rather than normative. The reception pattern supports four positioning rules, each tied to a finding rather than asserted in general. Table 12 anchors the first, since 61.1% of respondents want the industry to adopt AI selectively and a further 33.3% want gradual adoption, leaving only a token share favouring outright rejection or refusal. First, lead with story, not technology. Across the open responses, respondents repeat that the story must come first and that AI is a tool in its service, and 77.8% of them name maintaining a balance with human actors as their main advice

to filmmakers. A campaign that foregrounds the human craft a film preserves, and treats AI as a means to that end, speaks to the negotiated reading directly, and it aligns with a human centred view of contemporary marketing and with how audiences circulate meaning around media [26], [27]. Second, calibrate the claim to genre. Table 4 shows that an assertive AI message is safe in action, fantasy, animation, and science fiction, where audiences expect spectacle, but risky in drama and comedy, where the same message signals a loss of emotional authenticity. A single promotional template applied across a slate would therefore misfire on roughly half of it. Third, design for the artificial, not the near human. Because most respondents prefer openly stylised characters (Table 7), promotion that celebrates a character's invented, fantastical quality will travel better than promotion that promises a flawless human likeness, a point that aligns with the virtual influencer evidence that obvious artifice can protect rather than damage engagement [14], [17]. Fourth, communicate transparently. The deepfake and virtual influencer literatures converge on disclosure as the variable that preserves trust and the large neutral segment in Table 3 is precisely the group that transparent, educative communication can move toward acceptance [5], [16]. These four rules narrow the contribution from a general call for cultural sensitivity to a set of decisions a marketing team can actually make.

Table 12. Recommended Indonesian Film Industry Response to AI

Response strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Adopt selectively	22	61.1%
Adopt gradually	12	33.3%
Maintain traditional approach	1	2.8%
Reject AI technology	1	2.8%
Total	**36**	**100%**

The same logic informs how the industry, not only its marketers, might proceed. Selective and gradual adoption, favoured together by 94.4% of respondents, gives performers, crews, and educators time to acquire adjacent skills such as motion-capture and voice work, and it gives policy time to set consent and compensation norms of the kind that emerged from the 2023 strikes in keeping with the idea that the cultural industries are sites of value and meaning rather than of economic output alone [3], [7], [28]. For a market whose strength rests on local stories and local taste this measured path protects the human relationships that the audience, on the evidence here, is unwilling to trade away [2].

4. Conclusion

Indonesian audiences in this study do not accept or reject AI virtual characters so much as negotiate them. High familiarity with the technology sits alongside firm conditions, namely that emotionally central roles stay human, that characters look honestly artificial, and that the line between the real and the artificial remains legible. Conceptually, this pattern advances reception scholarship in two ways. It shows that Hall's negotiated reading is not only a category but a measurable phenomenon, observable here as the coexistence of technical familiarity with persistent emotional and ethical concern, and it relocates the uncanny valley from a problem of visual fidelity to one of felt emotional truth within a collectivist, hybrid screen culture. For marketing communication, the contribution is equally specific: lead with story, calibrate the AI claim to genre, design for openly artificial characters, and communicate use transparently, with the neutral middle of the audience as the segment most open to persuasion. These claims are bounded by the study's design. The sample is small, non-probabilistic, and unusually media-literate, the instrument was validated for content but not for internal consistency, and the cross-sectional survey captures a single moment rather than a trajectory, so the findings should be read as a grounded hypothesis about an informed public rather than as a portrait of the national audience. Future work can test the pattern with a larger and more representative sample, add experimental manipulation of genre and disclosure to move from description to explanation, and track reception over time as the technology and the law around it continue to change.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to express their deepest gratitude to Ilmu Komunikasi, FISIP, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia, for their continued support in completing this research. Special thanks are extended to the colleagues and reviewers who provided insightful feedback and constructive suggestions, which greatly improved the quality of this paper.

Declarations

Author contribution	:	CHDS: research idea, analyzed the data, and wrote the article; ENSA, TH, LLR: analyzed the data and wrote the article.
Funding statement	:	The research is funded under RKAT Universitas Sebelas Maret Tahun Anggaran 2025 melalui Skema Penelitian Penguatan Kapasitas Grup Riset (PKGR-UNS) B Project No. 371/UN27.22/PT.01.03/2025.
Conflict of interest	:	The authors declare no conflict of interest.
Additional information	:	No additional information is available for this paper.

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