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## THE USE VIRTUAL YOUTUBERS (VTUBER) IN INFORMATION DISSEMINATION EFFORTS BY GOVERNEMENT INSTITUTION

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### Abstract

Information dissemination is one of the primary activities carried out by various institutions, particularly those in the information services sector. The Meteorology, Climatology, and Geophysics Agency is a government agency that regularly disseminates information on climate, weather, and natural disasters, and has been innovating in its information dissemination methods. Having maintained a YouTube channel since 2017, this agency began innovating by using digital characters—known as virtual YouTubers (VTubers)—in 2024. Based on observations of its channel, the number of viewers accessing information presented by these digital characters tends to be higher compared to content without them. These virtual YouTubers have become a unique attraction for the public and align with the digital culture of young people. This is one of the key motivations behind this study. Additionally, this research aims to understand how the public responds to the information dissemination innovations implemented by the government agency, in this case the BMKG Gowa, when using digital characters as its medium. This study examines the public's reception, understanding, and evaluation of the information dissemination conducted by the BMKG Gowa. The research method employed was quantitative, involving the collection of responses from 397 participants. Data analysis was based on the theory of information dissemination strategies, which encompasses the recipient, source, information content, context, and medium. These five factors serve as the primary indicators for measuring information dissemination in this study. The results of this study indicate that information dissemination using virtual YouTubers is well-received and positively evaluated by a significant portion of the public. Furthermore, the use of virtual YouTubers does not affect the public's level of understanding regarding the information presented. The public remains able to clearly understand and trust the accuracy and relevance of the information provided.

**Keywords:** information dissemination, innovation of dissemination, virtual youtuber.

### INTRODUCTION

Information dissemination is the process of spreading information using specific ideas and innovations so that the information can be effectively received and utilized by specific individuals or groups as recipients; this can be carried out through various forms of

communication or media (Rodin, 2020). With the advancement of technology, the process of information dissemination has become increasingly easier and more diverse. A number of institutions, particularly those in the information services sector, have made information dissemination their primary activity. There are many ways in which government agencies carry out the process of information dissemination, including through print media, face-to-face interactions, and social media. The presence of information dissemination by these institutions impacts the behavior of information dissemination itself and is highly dependent on the effects generated by such dissemination (Hao et al., 2024).

Efforts to disseminate information will significantly influence the behavior of those who receive it. Numerous studies have shown that the dissemination of high-quality information has a positive impact on users' behavior. Meanwhile, the dissemination of misinformation can lead to biased reactions and even irrational decision-making (Deng, 2025). Given the impact of information dissemination, every institution needs to pay attention to the methods and forms of information dissemination currently in use. After all, the practice of disseminating information—whether orally, in writing, or even through literacy activities—significantly influences how that information is received (Meyer, 2009). The ease of access to various online channels and social media platforms today also influences the process of information dissemination. The rapid formation of social networks in the digital world today also accelerates the spread and reach of information (Lerman & Ghosh, 2010).

Badan Meteorologi, Klimatologi, dan Geofisika Gowa City is a government agency that regularly disseminates information regarding natural conditions and potential disasters. One of the most interesting aspects of this agency is its use of media to disseminate information. The agency utilizes a YouTube channel featuring virtual characters, commonly known as VTubers. VTubers are content creators who use 2D characters or avatars to present themselves on video platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. VTubers can embody any character based on their creativity, ranging from anime characters, game characters, to original characters. In the process of using VTuber characters, motion capture technology is typically employed to animate the characters. Some commonly used applications include VtubeStudio and PrprLives; these applications help VTubers move in sync with the body movements of the person behind the screen, such as blinking, speaking, and so on. Just like content creators in general, VTubers also present a wide variety of unique and entertaining content to their audience, ranging from interacting with viewers—commonly known as “free talk”—to playing games, covering songs, and even providing the latest news and updates, much like a news broadcast.

This is exactly what the Gowa City BMKG is trying to implement. The agency has introduced an innovation in the media it uses to disseminate information. This VTuber character, named Shina Faultline, was specifically created and introduced to the public to coincide with the 77th anniversary of the Meteorology, Climatology, and Geophysics Agency (BMKG) on July 21, 2024. Her first video at that time was an effort to disseminate information related to earthquakes, earthquake mitigation with the “drop, cover, and hold” slogan, and about the BMKG. The premiere was quite successful, garnering 33,646 views, 3,000 likes, and 354 comments within a three-month period.

To date, the official BMKG channel for Gowa City continues to regularly disseminate information using a virtual YouTuber character. It is hoped that this consistent innovation will serve as a unique draw for the public to engage with various BMKG-related information and news. The use of virtual YouTubers in information dissemination is no longer merely a digital trend but has become a strategic issue in information science. Government agencies have

adopted virtual YouTubers as a medium for delivering information in a more interactive and audience-oriented manner, thereby shifting the paradigm of government information dissemination away from its formal, text-based, and largely one-way nature. From an information science perspective, this is particularly significant regarding how information must ultimately be packaged, represented, and made accessible to the public. The use of virtual YouTubers can even serve as agents of transformation within the current information ecosystem. This transformation may influence the public's understanding of various pieces of information today.

Furthermore, in the context of information dissemination, virtual YouTubers serve as an alternative model for broader information distribution. Information dissemination becomes more effective in reaching audiences, particularly regarding government agency content. However, the effectiveness of this dissemination still depends on various other factors, ranging from content creation strategies, the public's digital literacy levels, to the agency's own capacity to manage high-quality information. The use of virtual YouTubers by government agencies, however, represents a convergence of technological development, information behavior, and public communication strategies. Although there is a significant body of research demonstrating the various impacts of information dissemination on information usage behavior, to date, no studies have examined the public's level of acceptance toward information dissemination conducted by virtual YouTubers. Moreover, this innovation is being implemented by a government agency whose primary focus is to regularly provide up-to-date information regarding various natural phenomena that have recently emerged across Indonesia.

A number of considerations—ranging from the users, the information sources, the content of the information, the context, to the media used—serve as the indicators for this research discussion. Several studies on information dissemination have been conducted using this framework. The dissemination of zero-waste information by the Foundation for the Development of Bioscience and Biotechnology was successfully carried out by considering dissemination strategies encompassing users, information sources, and the media used. The information disseminated at that time concerned household waste management through sorting and utilizing waste, particularly organic waste to be turned into compost (Fatkhah et al., 2020). In addition, another study examined the information dissemination process at the Tarlac District Engineering Office of the Department of Public Works and Highways, focusing on the dissemination of information within government agencies such as the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) in Tarlac. This study indicates that the success of the information dissemination process depends on management support, the availability of facilities and budget, and is also influenced by systematic organization and information dissemination strategies (Panopio, 2023).

Unlike some previous studies, this research examines the use of a new form of media—virtual YouTuber characters—which government agencies can utilize in their efforts to disseminate important information to the public. One of the key topics addressed in this study is the level of public acceptance of information disseminated through this new method. Furthermore, several assessments of information dissemination efforts serve as the primary indicators of this study, so that the results can provide insights into the optimal use of these virtual YouTuber characters in information dissemination efforts, particularly for government agencies in Indonesia today.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a survey method to collect data regarding users' perceptions of various types of information disseminated through virtual YouTubers by government agencies. This quantitative approach was chosen because it allows for the systematic processing of numerical data and enables generalizations based on statistical analysis of a specific population. Furthermore, the survey method is widely used in information dissemination research to identify behavioral patterns, media usage levels, and factors influencing the effectiveness of information dissemination to the audience (Knopeke et al., 2019).

The population in this study consists of the audience or community that accesses the BMKG Kota Gowa YouTube channel; as of September 10, 2025, the channel had 50,900 subscribers. A sample was drawn from this population using purposive sampling. The criteria established for selection were that respondents must have viewed informational content featuring a virtual YouTuber from the BMKG Kota Gowa channel more than once. This criterion was applied to ensure the objectivity of respondents' answers regarding the disseminated content; the requirement of more than one viewing was also considered to ensure that respondents' answers were not merely attributed to chance.

Given the large population size and the researcher's limited reach regarding the number of respondents, the sample size was also determined using the Slovin formula. The use of a sample was necessary due to the researcher's limitations in terms of time and resources for conducting the study and collecting data from the population (Sugiyono, 2022). The margin of error was set at 5%, resulting in a total of 397 respondents reached in this study. All quantitative data were collected via a questionnaire to measure viewers' perceptions and levels of trust. Meanwhile, qualitative data was obtained through interviews with several audience members and the manager of the BMKG Kota Gowa YouTube channel to verify certain research findings. Qualitative data collection was not the primary data source but served as a reference for the researcher to analyze the phenomenon of audience acceptance of natural disaster information produced by this institution.

Data collection was conducted via an online questionnaire using a Likert scale to identify patterns in viewers' perceptions of information dissemination involving virtual YouTubers. The use of questionnaire-based surveys is considered effective in dissemination research because it can reach a large number of respondents and collect data efficiently (Aithal & Aithal, 2020). Research variables refer to an information dissemination model that includes key components such as the source, message, channel, and audience (Serrat, 2017). This model serves as a crucial framework for understanding how information is disseminated from institutions to the public and how those messages are received and processed. In the context of this study, virtual YouTubers are positioned as a digital communication medium or channel that plays a role in conveying government information to the public through platforms such as YouTube.

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistical analysis to present findings regarding the patterns of respondents' understanding and perceptions of the information conveyed by virtual YouTubers. In addition, qualitative data in the form of interviews with relevant parties was also collected to supplement the quantitative findings. Qualitative analysis was not conducted as a means of comparison but rather to provide further explanation for certain numerical findings that required elaboration from the sources.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Technological advancements in the digital age have driven significant changes in the dissemination of information to the public. The use of social media has become the primary means of information dissemination because it can reach a wide audience. Dissemination is the process of spreading information to target groups or individuals so that they can obtain information, accept it, and ultimately change their behavior. Dissemination involves the spreading and connecting of ideas, innovations, or research findings so that they become known to the public (Setyanto et al., 2017). Information dissemination is the process of spreading information through the use of innovative methods so that the information provided can be effectively received and utilized by the general public as the recipients of the information (Rodin, 2020). When carrying out the dissemination process, it is necessary to have a dissemination strategy that takes into account users, information sources, the content itself, the context, and the choice of media used (Serrat, 2017). This concept forms the basis of this study, which examines the implementation of information dissemination by a government agency in Indonesia—in this case, the Gowa City BMKG—which utilizes virtual YouTubers to disseminate information.

In information dissemination, media-sharing platforms like YouTube offer distinct advantages due to their ability to share various media formats, including images, videos, and audio. The use of social media platforms by government agencies represents an innovative approach to communicating information to the public. The findings of this study indicate that the use of virtual YouTubers as a form of digital communication by government agencies is an innovation that is positively received by the public. Theoretically, research in the field of digital communication also suggests that the use of visual and interactive media can enhance the effectiveness of information delivery and audience engagement (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Veirman, 2019). In this context, virtual YouTubers—as digital representations that combine visual, audio, and interactive elements—serve as an effective medium for disseminating public information.

Table 1. Respondents' Acceptance of Information Dissemination via Virtual YouTubers

Statement items	Respondents' answers in percentage (%)				
	5	4	3	2	1
Understanding of the message	35	54	8	3	0
Interest in innovation	40	36	21	2	1
Interest in information	37	40	20	2	1
Viewer enthusiasm	37	39	21	2	1
Experience of watching similar content	37	35	21	5	2
Experience of watching similar information	37	42	14	7	0
Gain of new knowledge	52	39	7	1	1

Recipients (users), in this case, are the parties targeted by the message sent from the source to the recipient (Cangara, 2017). In this section, a number of respondents were asked for their opinions regarding their level of understanding of the information, their interest in and enthusiasm for content featuring virtual YouTubers, and the new knowledge they gained after viewing the information shared. Table 1 shows the respondents' answers as percentages. The vast majority of respondents gave positive responses (agreed) to a number of the statements provided. In this indicator, the responses of a number of participants indicate that they gained

new knowledge about natural disasters after accessing content presented by a virtual YouTuber in the informational content that was shared. This suggests that the process of disseminating information is effective in enhancing the audience’s understanding. A study on computers in human behavior conducted previously showed that digital content that is visually and narratively engaging can improve information retention and user understanding (Sundar, 2020). In addition, respondents’ interest in the innovation of virtual YouTubers indicates the influence of the novelty effect, whereby new technologies or media can increase audience attention and motivation to receive information. Research by New Media & Society also confirms that innovations in digital content delivery formats can increase user engagement, particularly among younger generations who are accustomed to interactive media (Kaye, 2021).

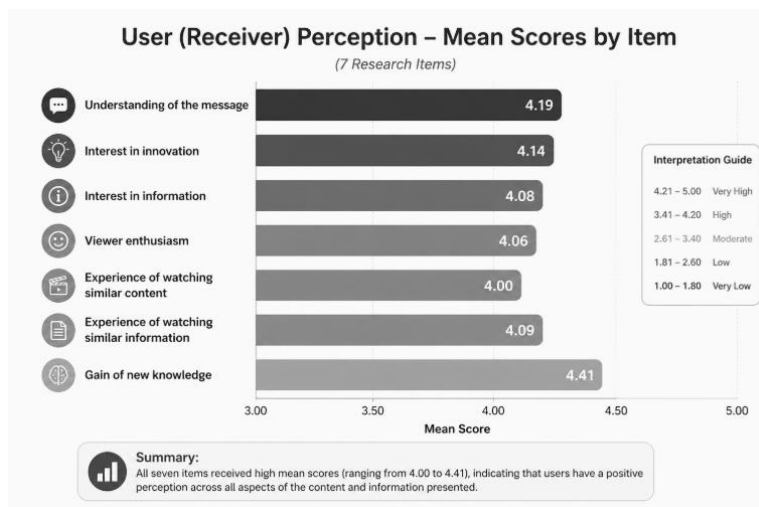


Figure 1. Respondents' acceptance of information dissemination content with virtual YouTubers

Furthermore, other findings indicate that respondents are drawn to informational content featuring virtual YouTubers not only for its entertainment value but also because they have a need for the information contained therein, particularly regarding natural disasters. In any case, an effective information dissemination strategy does indeed need to combine informational and entertainment aspects (infotainment). The combination of informative content and engaging presentation can increase engagement and encourage the audience to continue accessing information (Bucher, 2017). This aligns with existing findings, which indicate that respondents are interested in the information content provided because they have a need for such information and also view virtual YouTubers as a form of entertainment. Thus, in the context of information dissemination by this institution, virtual YouTubers can be considered an effective educational tool for improving the public’s disaster literacy.

Table 2. Respondents' trust in the information provided

Statement items	Respondents' answers in percentage (%)				
	5	4	3	2	1
Trust in the information source	35	49	12	3	1
Trust in the information source	32	53	11	3	1
Accuracy of the information	39	49	10	1	1

Another finding is found in the source section, which examines how respondents perceive the content and sources presented—specifically, whether they consider them accurate and trustworthy. All of the respondents' answers in Table 2 indicate that a fairly high percentage of respondents agreed that they trust the information presented and consider it accurate. The research results show that respondents view the information conveyed by the virtual YouTuber character as a credible and trustworthy source of information. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that the information conveyed comes from the BMKG as an official government agency. By definition, a source is a party that provides or conveys information that possesses credibility and reliability to the recipient; a source may be a person or individual, a group, a corporate organization, or even a country (Mulyana, 2019). The credibility of a source is a key factor in the successful dissemination of information; the level of trust in an information source significantly influences how the audience receives the message (Appleman & Sundar, 2016).

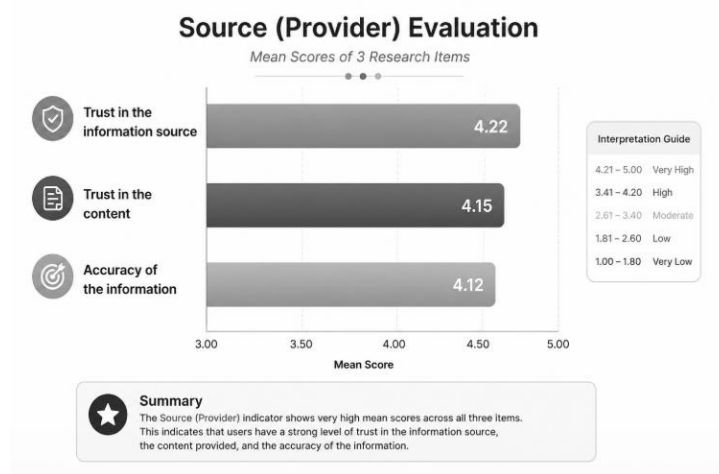


Figure 2. Evaluation of information dissemination content using virtual YouTubers reviewed from the information source

In the context of this study, the use of virtual YouTubers does not undermine the credibility of information; rather, it reinforces it because it is backed by clear institutional authority. Other research findings related to this information source also indicate that in the digital environment, the credibility of information is determined not only by the source but also by how the message is conveyed, including visual design and consistency of information (Flanagin et al., 2020). This is precisely what makes the findings of this study so relevant. The presentation of information about natural disasters through virtual YouTubers is considered engaging and well-organized, and it also helps reinforce the audience's trust in the information being conveyed.

Another indicator in this study is information content, which refers to a message conveyed by a sender to a receiver; this message can be verbal (written or spoken language) or nonverbal (gestures) and can be understood by the receiver (Cangara, 2017). A number of respondents were asked for their opinions on various forms of verbal and nonverbal communication by virtual YouTubers. These forms of communication included language use, word choice, tone and speaking speed, as well as supporting information such as subtitles and viewer comments in each piece of content. The results of the study indicate that the language

used by virtual YouTubers in BMKG content is considered clear, structured, and easy to understand.

Table 3. Information Content

Statement items	Respondents' answers in percentage (%)				
	5	4	3	2	1
Language use	39	48	10	2	1
Subtitle availability	39	40	17	4	0
Word Choice	35	44	17	2	2
Image Selection	35	43	18	3	1
Interaction in discussion	22	32	40	4	2
Information structure	45	38	15	2	0
Topic relevance	51	39	8	2	0
Speech tempo	35	44	18	3	0
Speech tone	33	50	13	4	0

The research findings indicate that the language used by virtual YouTubers in BMKG content is considered clear, structured, and easy to understand. This is evidenced by the respondents' answers in Table 3, where the percentage of respondents with positive opinions exceeds 70% on average. The positive opinions in question refer to the respondents' agreement that various communication tools—such as language and subtitles—which support the delivery of information are considered effective

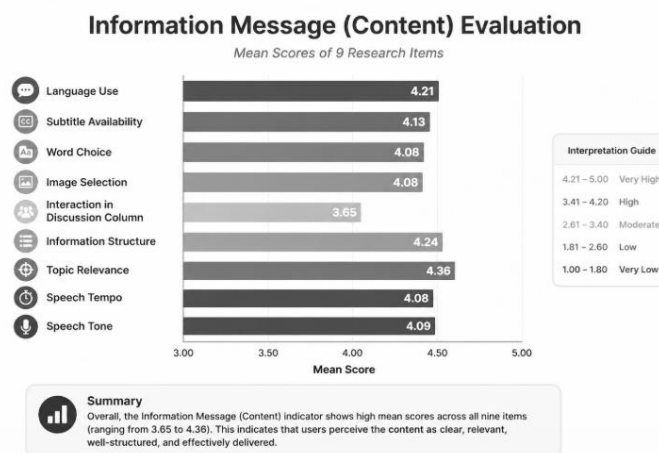


Figure 3. The results of respondents' review to the content of information messages (content) with virtual YouTubers

Additionally, the use of subtitles helps enhance the audience's comprehension of the information presented. Nevertheless, the simultaneous use of multimedia elements—such as text, audio, and visuals—can enhance the effectiveness of learning and information comprehension (Mayer, 2021). Multimedia learning theory explains that combining various forms of information representation can aid cognitive processes in better understanding a message. Additionally, alignment between the title and the content is also a key factor in enhancing audience trust and satisfaction. Research published in the Journal of Advertising indicates that consistency between the title and the content can improve perceptions of information quality and reduce the risk of misinformation (Voorveld et al., 2018). Thus, a well-

structured and consistent message is a key factor in the successful dissemination of information through digital media.

The next information dissemination strategy in this study relates to context. Context itself can be defined as all factors outside the individuals communicating, consisting of physical aspects. Therefore, this study explores the opinions of a number of respondents regarding the audience's context when accessing information from this BMKG channel. The results of the study on a number of respondents indicate that their interest in content featuring virtual YouTubers is more influenced by the innovation and relevance of the content than by social influences from their immediate environment, such as friends or family. As shown in Table 4, the number of respondents who agreed with the statement that accessing informational content is driven by the social environment was lower (26% and 36%) than for other factors such as the need for information, its relevance to current circumstances, and its accessibility.

Table 4. Information Context

Statement items	Respondents' answers in percentage (%)				
	5	4	3	2	1
Influence of attitude	42	43	10	4	1
Impression of the information	22	36	33	5	4
Time accessibility opportunity	31	42	20	5	2
Need for information	41	36	15	7	1
Relevance to culture	43	40	15	2	0
Influence from the surrounding environment	26	36	24	8	6

These factors are the primary drivers for viewers to access informational content featuring virtual YouTubers, rather than social influence. This suggests that internal factors, such as personal interest and information needs, play a more dominant role than external factors, such as suggestions or recommendations from close associates. A study on the environment and social media states that individual motivation in accessing digital information is more influenced by information needs and personal interests than by social pressure (Whiting et al., 2013)

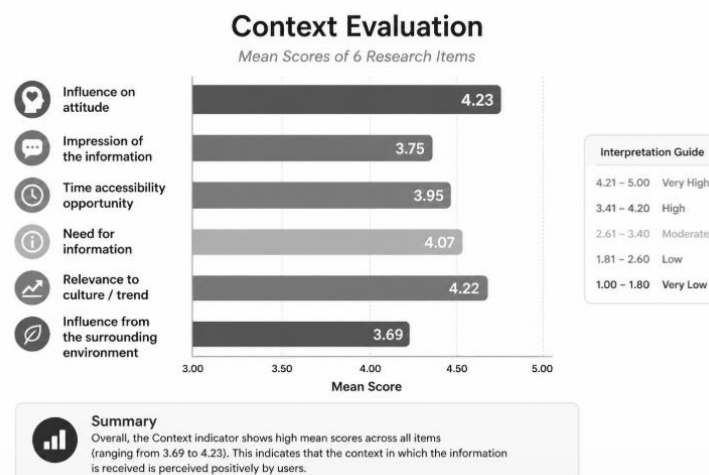


Figure 4. The results of respondents' review of content with virtual YouTubers are reviewed from the context

The finding that YouTubers’ virtual content influences respondents’ attitudes toward natural disasters indicates a cognitive impact resulting from the dissemination of information. Respondents’ knowledge has increased, particularly regarding current practices in natural disaster mitigation. Effective risk communication can influence public perceptions and behaviors regarding potential disasters (Linden et al., 2020). The information dissemination efforts carried out by the Gowa City BMKG have demonstrated a cognitive impact on a number of its viewers; it is certainly possible that other BMKGs could implement this approach to disseminate information related to natural disasters. The use of virtual YouTubers as a communication medium can clearly be an effective strategy for government agencies in disseminating information about their institutions.

From a digital culture perspective, the virtual YouTuber’s delivery style—which aligns with the characteristics of the younger generation—is also a key factor in the success of information dissemination. A study was once conducted, and the results showed some indicates that the younger generation tends to be more responsive to digital content that is visual, interactive, and easily accessible via social media (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). This explains why content featuring digital characters is able to capture the audience’s attention and boost engagement.

Table 5. Media Quality

Statement items	Respondents' answers in percentage (%)				
	5	4	3	2	1
Video quality	47	40	9	2	2
Audio quality	48	41	7	3	1
Style	36	41	19	3	1
Expression	25	52	16	6	1

Finally, this study examines the medium, which in this context refers to the quality of the medium through which information is conveyed. A medium is essentially the tool used to transmit information from its source to the recipient. A number of respondents were asked for their opinions on the video and audio quality of the content itself, which serves as the medium for disseminating information. The majority of respondents’ answers were positive, as evidenced by the high percentage of responses in the “strongly agree” and “agree” categories. Table 5 shows that, on average, nearly 80% of respondents stated that the quality of the information presented by virtual YouTubers was excellent in terms of video, audio, and even delivery style. The results of the study indicate that the video and audio quality of this content is considered very good, allowing respondents to comfortably enjoy the informational content. Technical aspects of digital content, such as video resolution and audio clarity, do indeed influence user satisfaction and engagement, according to the study’s findings (Zimmermann & Kaspar, 2022). In addition, respondents were asked about visual aspects such as the virtual YouTuber’s facial expressions and body movements, which received positive feedback and served as a key attraction of the content itself. In the context of digital communication, expressive visual representations can enhance social presence in media interactions. Virtual characters with realistic expressions and interactions can foster emotional closeness between users and the media (Oh et al., 2013). This explains why virtual YouTubers are ultimately able to create a more personal communication experience compared to previously existing conventional media.

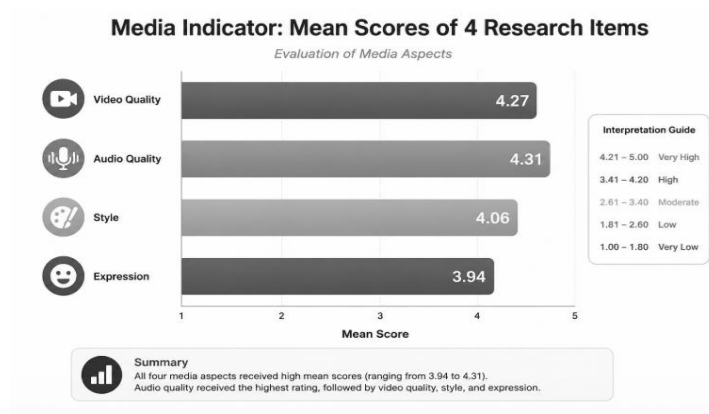


Figure 5. The results of respondents' review of media in information content with virtual YouTubers

Overall, the results of this study indicate that the use of virtual YouTubers as a medium for disseminating information by government institutions holds great potential for enhancing the effectiveness of public communication. This success is supported by a combination of source credibility, message quality, contextual relevance, and the use of engaging and interactive media. These findings also reinforce previous research stating that digital transformation in public communication requires media innovations capable of reaching audiences more broadly and effectively (Lips, 2020). Nevertheless, the research results indicate that the use of virtual YouTubers in the information dissemination process can be viewed as a form of digital communication innovation that not only captures attention but also enhances public understanding and awareness of critical issues such as natural disasters. This demonstrates that the integration of technology and creativity in information dissemination is a relevant and effective strategy in today's digital age

## CONCLUSION

The use of virtual YouTubers as a medium for disseminating information by a government agency—in this case, the Gowa City Meteorological, Climatological, and Geophysical Agency (BMKG)—represents an innovation in spreading information related to natural disasters through digital media. This innovation has been positively received by a number of respondents. The use of digital characters in the information content produced does not, in fact, diminish the credibility of the information conveyed; on the contrary, the novelty of this medium for conveying information actually serves as one of the attractions for the public to watch the information content presented. Similarly, the credibility of the information content does not affect respondents' doubts regarding the credibility of the information conveyed. Supporting elements such as information sources, credible content sources, and subtitles are considered interesting and beneficial by respondents. Based on the content itself, the delivery of information via virtual YouTubers is deemed structured, clear, and easy to understand. Thus, the use of virtual YouTubers in government agencies' efforts to disseminate information has proven capable of enhancing and expanding knowledge in today's digital era. Furthermore, VTuber innovations not only capture the public's attention but are also effective in disseminating informative, credible, and relevant information regarding natural disasters that align with the public's needs.

Ultimately, the results of this study indicate that virtual YouTubers can serve as an alternative medium for disseminating information today, particularly in relation to the digital culture of today's youth. The integration of technological advancements and communication innovations has given rise to a new phenomenon in the field of information science, especially regarding the dissemination of information. It is not inconceivable that this could become a catalyst for change in the broader process of information dissemination. Information messages that are received in a more personal, inclusive, and relevant manner—especially by the current generation—are clearly key considerations in the context of information dissemination. Furthermore, future research could be conducted with a broader scope and deeper focus, particularly regarding other variables. Some variables related to the information dissemination process in question could range from changes in behavior to the level of digital literacy among the target audience.

### **SUGGESTION**

Based on the results of this study, several recommendations can be proposed for current scientific development, including efforts to disseminate information through various innovations, which could serve as an alternative option for government agencies in particular. The delivery of information can be accepted as new knowledge with its own appeal through such innovations. The idea of using virtual YouTubers is not impossible, provided that the concept is developed in line with current trends and media access culture. Another perspective can be explored by delving into the reasons why the public or information users trust certain content featuring virtual YouTubers. Additionally, in the context of repackaging information, further research can be conducted by exploring the optimization of information content and media diversification. This is crucial in ensuring that the information produced is accurate, relevant, and engaging for users.

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