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Norms and Negotiation in Indonesian Plave Fandom on X

Norma dan Negosiasi dalam Fandom Plave Indonesia di X

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ABSTRACT

In virtual idol fandoms, fans often follow shared norms that shape how they interact with one another. This research draws on fandom, norms, and negotiation theories to explore how such norms emerge and are negotiated within the Plave fandom on social media X, focusing on the figure of “Terra Plave” as the controlling presence behind Plave’s virtual idol avatar. Based on data from phenomenological interviews with four Indonesian fans, the study identifies two central aspects of these norms: the types of accounts fans use and their responses to provocative posts and doxxing. The findings suggest that the norms surrounding Terra Plave reflect an ongoing process of negotiation among fans, aimed at resolving internal conflicts triggered by official statements from Plave’s label.

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ABSTRAK

Dalam fandom idola virtual, penggemar sering mengikuti norma-norma bersama yang membentuk cara mereka berinteraksi dengan satu sama lain. Penelitian ini mengacu pada teori fandom dan teori norma untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana norma-norma tersebut muncul dan dinegosiasikan dalam fandom Plave di media sosial X, dengan fokus pada figur “Terra Plave” sebagai sosok pengendali dibalik avatar idola virtual Plave. Berdasarkan data wawancara fenomenologi terhadap empat orang penggemar Indonesia, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi dua aspek utama dari norma-norma tersebut, yaitu jenis akun yang digunakan penggemar dan tanggapan mereka terhadap ungahan provokatif dan doxxing. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan norma seputar Terra Plave mencerminkan proses negosiasi yang sedang berlangsung di antara para penggemar, ditujukan untuk menyelesaikan konflik internal yang dipicu oleh pernyataan resmi dari label yang menaungi Plave.

Introduction

The entertainment industry is experiencing an increased number of active virtual idols globally due to technological developments (Liu, 2023). Moreover, thanks to motion capture technology for recording and reconstructing movements into 3D virtual forms, virtual idols are also enabled to fully express themselves as what are known as virtual YouTubers (hereafter referred to as VTubers) (Bhakti et al., 2015; L. Chen et al., 2023). The world's attention to K-pop groups, particularly in South Korea, has fueled the emergence of virtual idols (Lyu, 2023). In its evolution, the K-pop industry also adopted the concept of VTuber-type virtual idols. This adoption results in the birth of artists who not only contribute to Korean pop music but also function as YouTubers by utilizing virtual avatars such as Plave.

Plave (written as 플레이브 [Peul-le-i-beu] in Korean) is a South Korean virtual idol group under the company VLAST with five male avatars: Yejun, Noah, Bamby, Eunho, and Hamin (VLAST Co., n.d., 2024:1–17). According to Vlast's official website, Plave utilizes real-time graphics technology powered by Vlast's game engine. Since their debut on March 12, 2023, until February 2025, Plave has released one single album, three mini albums, and three digital singles (VLAST Co., n.d., 2024:22–41), which led them to win multiple music awards. However, not only do they do idol activities such as releasing songs and music videos, holding concerts, and so on, but Plave is also active as VTubers by holding live broadcasts where the five members perform varied activities regularly on their official YouTube channel (PLAVE 플레이브 @plave_official) with 1.02 million subscribers (as of May 07, 2025).



Figure 1 Plave (from left to right: Eunho-Bamby-Yejun-Noah-Hamin)

Source: Plave's official X account plave_official

The social sciences and humanities approach—generally through the use of qualitative methods—sheds light on online communities and their norms by examining aspects such as communication patterns within online communities, researching how these norms are formed and applied to regulate the community in question, and conducting case studies on norm negotiation within online communities (Danis & Lee, 2002; Dewi et al., 2024; Fiesler & Bruckman, 2019). In other words, social and cultural approaches clarify the social, cultural, and interactive dimensions of the digital space. Considering

numerous studies in the humanities, it is evident that technology significantly influences virtual idols and fandom within the metaverse context. The result includes technologies that stimulate creative concepts and drive substantial growth in the virtual idol sector, thereby solidifying virtual idols' position as a key component of the global creative industry and media and cultural landscape; creating fanbases and facilitating interactions between virtual idols and their fans through various online events; and even enabling fans to exercise creativity and participate in producing original content for their favorite virtual idols (Chen & Skey, 2024; Hwang, 2024; Zaborowski, 2024).

As a K-pop virtual idol group, Plave's existence is closely related to "*nakanohito*". Lu et al. (2021) use the term *nakanohito* to refer to the figure of the streamer who is the controller behind the virtual idol avatar. In addition to Lu et al. (2021), the term *nakanohito* itself has also been used in several other studies that discuss virtual idols, especially VTubers (Huang, 2024; Lee & Lee, 2023; Wan & Lu, 2024). However, in Plave's fandom named "Plli," fans commonly refer to the *nakanohito* as "Irl (in real life) Plave" or "Terra (here meaning earth) people," which relates to Plave's lore as aliens. Assuming that the term "Terra" is more familiar to fans and the general public while still conveying the intended meaning, Plave's avatar controllers will henceforth be referred to as "Terra Plave." When someone debuts as a virtual idol, their avatar controller identity is not publicly disclosed (e.g., Apoki, Alban Knox, Usada Pekora, Kobo Kanaeru, and Hakos Baelz). This condition also applies to each member of Plave, as confirmed by Vlast as Plave's label, which emphasizes that Plave is a virtual idol entity with an unpublished "body" (Plave_ring, 2024; PLAVE, 2023). In fact, Terra Plave's personal information is said to be strictly confidential between the agency (Vlast) and the artist (Plave), and fans are asked to adopt a culture where the artist's personal information is not revealed and disseminated (Plave_ring, 2024; PLAVE, 2023).

Prevailing norms can control aspects such as attitude/behavior in fandom. Moreover, Danis and Lee (2002) argue that through norms, individuals can know how to behave and not to misbehave. In addition, group norms are often applied as a prerequisite for whether or not a person is accepted in a community (Danis & Lee, 2002). In the context of fandom, norms play a role in shaping individual and collective identities, reflecting social challenges and values that help connect discussions about fandom norms specifically with discussions of identity-related values and norms in general, controlling and influencing how fans interact with their idols and society, and maintaining the order of a community (Fiesler & Bruckman, 2019; Muslimah et al., 2023; Parsakia & Jafari, 2023; Perbawani & Nuralin, 2021; Reichenberger & Smith, 2020; Wirawan, 2024). Therefore, norms in fandoms as social groups that are part of society in general are relevant and important to study. Along with the emergence of fandom as an increasingly integrated aspect of life, it has become an important bridge between the macro (economic, social, and cultural transformation) and micro (intrapersonal enjoyment and fan-to-fan motivation) forces that are dominant in our time (Harrington et al., 2017). Fandom needs to be investigated and critically analyzed (Harrington et al., 2017).

Digital technology (e.g., social media, AI, smartphones, and online platforms) has, without a doubt, transformed how people connect and dominate communication as the central channel (Sevinj, 2025). Moreover, recent media and communication studies highlight how fandom practices are embedded within broader digital ecosystems that shape personal identities and everyday situations (Wirawan, 2024; Yahya, 2024). According to Soh et al. (2024) narrative review, digital environments and identity influence one another in ways such as how people perform their identities depending on how much they choose to engage with digital environments, how they shape their online worlds by asserting who they are through digital self-presentation, how the way identify triggers various reactions from algorithms in online spaces, and how they might use feedback and social comparisons they harvest online in ways their identity can be influenced.

As far as my observations go, the outline of the norms and values in the Plli fandom, including about Terra Plave, is established through fans with dominance/influence. Such influence is obtained through the number of audience/followers on social media such as X (formerly Twitter, hereafter referred to as

X). Regarding X, Andriani (2018) mentions that the number of followers is an indicator of a user's social reputation, so the user becomes an increasingly important figure if the number of followers increases. In addition to the number of social media audiences/followers, influence can also be obtained through the fan's involvement in something, such as a fan event committee that can determine the rules of the event. The construction of norms and values in the Plli fandom is influenced by dynamics of domination and power, suggesting that the fandom is entangled in broader hegemonic relations within society. With regard to Terra Plave, the normative values that influential fans want to establish and disseminate seem to be supportive of Vlast's warnings not to disclose Terra Plave information, such as not mentioning Terra Plave both online and offline and not mixing up the space for talking about Terra Plave so as not to break the algorithm of content appearance on social media (1203PLLI, 2025; Eunhosfire, 2024; Manddeddiddi, 2024; Noline_EventINA, 2024; Peuldoongnuna, 2024b, 2024a). In addition, it appears that among Plli fans, the behavior of exposing Plave's Terra personal identity/information is commonly referred to as doxxing (Bambywrld, 2023; Lmnoplli, 2025; Okamieunho, 2024; Plvnmyjn, 2025; Yejunszone, 2024).

Nonetheless, as a Plave fan, I discovered that topics related to Terra Plave seem to be sensitive among fans, and conversations about it continue to surface in the Plli fandom from time to time. This phenomenon is particularly evident on social media as part of the virtual world. I assume that the periodic emergence of topics related to Terra Plave in Plli fandom is due to the fact that Plave's avatar has a human behind the scenes as a fundamental element (ABC News (Australia), 2024; Arirang News, 2024). Automatically, Plave relies on their Terra selves in various activities, including vocalizing and performing as a virtual idol (Keith, 2024; Suan, 2021). As such, some fans may be curious about the virtual idol's Terra identity.

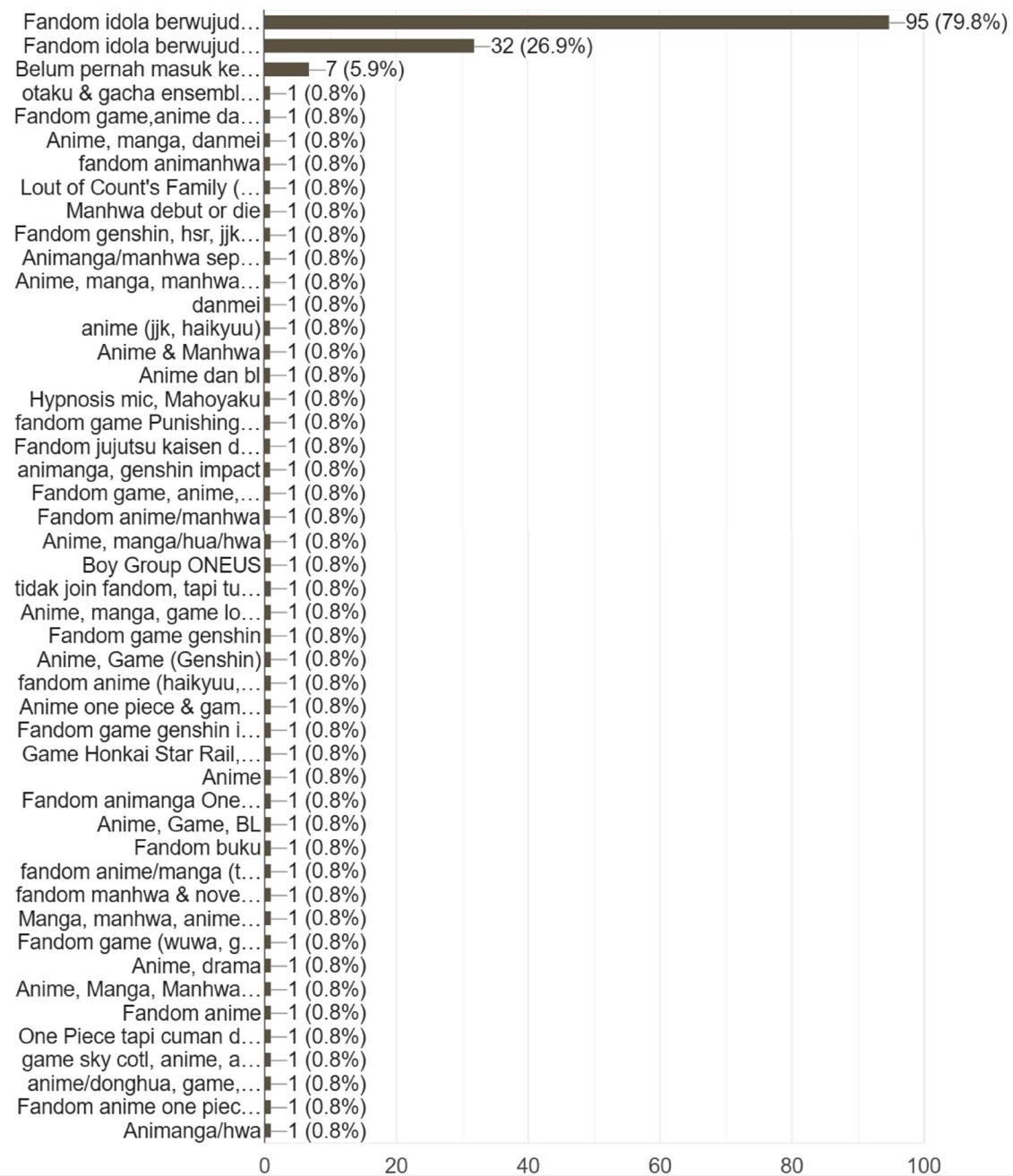
In general, the Plli fandom is divided into two groups: (1) fans who do not know and do not want to know about Terra Plave; (2) fans who know and like Terra Plave. With regard to the second group, I also assume that people want to talk about/interact with content related to what they like. The two groups have conflicting interests, making topics related to Terra Plave vulnerable to sparking internal debates. In addition, this conflict raises the question of how fans should address issues related to Terra Plave so that the fandom can continue to operate optimally. This is because, although establishing an outline of norms and values in the Plli fandom is influenced by fans who have dominance/influence, not all fans necessarily share the same assumptions. Moreover, based on my observations during my involvement in the Plli fandom, Plave, as a K-pop virtual idol group, attracts fans from different backgrounds with cultures that are not necessarily assumed to be the same.

I suspect that these different backgrounds may have an effect in creating different perceptions and understandings among fans regarding Terra Plave, norms regarding Terra Plave, and/or the way fans behave towards it. Specifically in Indonesia, based on the survey I conducted to screen the sources for this research with 119 respondents, it appears that before joining the Plli fandom, there were fans who were previously members of the fandoms of real human idols only, virtual idols only, anime (animation with distinguishing graphic design arising from Japan (Kamaludin et al., 2023) and manga (Japanese comics (Darmo & Chandra, 2024), games, and/or others. Some even belong to more than one of the fandoms mentioned or have never belonged to any fandom.

Sebelum menjadi seorang Plili, Anda pernah masuk ke fandom apa saja?

[Copy chart](#)

119 responses

**Figure 2** Survey Respondents' Previous Fandom(s) Chart

Source: Personal documentation, 2025

I will use my experience as an example that might support my suspicion. Prior to becoming a Plili, between 2012 and 2024, as a female Indonesian citizen, I was part of a number of fandoms (K-pop [Boyfriend, X1, EXO, N-Flying], Thai actresses and actors, and anime and manga). In 2023, I discovered Plave as the first virtual idol that caught my attention and became a fan through their animations and music. Coming from a background of only human-form idol fandom, I fell into the category of Plili who learned of Terra Plave due to the emergence of doxxing content through social media algorithms. The content aroused my personal curiosity and led me to find out more about and like Terra Plave as well.

Since in previous fandoms I had never encountered fans delving into their idol's background and basic personal information (such as their off-stage names, career and education history, number of siblings, etc.) to be considered inappropriate, I initially thought there was nothing wrong with following my curiosity to personally explore Terra Plave's basic personal information. Also, the feeling of liking made me want to interact and talk about Terra Plave as well. However, I later discovered that it seems that fans from a different fandom background (mainly assumed to be from the Japanese media/idol [especially virtual] fandom) have a different view on the normative value of Terra Plave, that it is not permissible to do so (Shenswari, 2025). If you ask fans from other media fandom backgrounds who do not fall into the category of human idols or virtual idols, they may have the same or even different views from those expressed by Shenswari (2025).

This relates to the concept of appropriate fandom, where Stewart (2023) argues that there are different unspoken understandings of what is right and wrong in being and behaving as a fan. These understandings may differ between fans and society, fans and the media industry, or between different fandoms, or even within a fandom (Stewart, 2023). The term "appropriate fandom" is also used by Stewart (2023) to describe practices, behaviors, and attitudes that are considered appropriate, including those considered inappropriate. The distinction between the two (appropriate and inappropriate), according to Stewart (2023), is the trigger of many tensions within the structure—that is, the regulator and guide of social and cultural capital, behavior, and hierarchy—and the fan community.

The conflict of interest between fans who do not want to know Terra Plave and fans who know and like Terra Plave can be seen as disturbing the Plli fandom. This then relates to Danis and Lee's (2002) statement in their research that a marker of the need for change in a community's norms is the presence of events that are considered disruptive. The emergence of norm-related disagreements about appropriate values can be followed by initial attempts to improve group norms, leading to a negotiation of the prevailing norms (Danis & Lee, 2002). Returning to my personal experience as an example, I found that the views expressed by Shenswari (2025) were reinforced by the intensified enforcement of an outline handbook of norms related to Terra Plave by influential fans within the Plli fandom. My desire to interact and talk about Terra Plave has been hindered, and this hindrance may also be felt by other fans who also know and like Terra Plave. Thus, a negotiation of some sort seems necessary so that the Plli fandom can remain in a conducive state. According to Lewicki et al. (2024), negotiation itself can be defined as a process carried out by two or more parties to attempt to resolve/overcome their opposing interests. The occurrence of negotiation is driven by situations when parties are faced with the absence of an established or fixed procedure or set of rules regarding conflict resolution, when they choose to ignore these rules, or when they are inclined to create their own solutions to resolve conflicts (Lewicki et al., 2024).

Many studies have taken fans or fandoms as their objects with various topics as their focus. Some of them are soccer fandom (Fuller, 2017; Lebed & Morgulev, 2023; Prabasmoro & Ridwansyah, 2020), movie and television series fandom (Sexton, 2017; Waysdorf & Reijnders, 2019; Zhang, 2022), book fandom (Burke, 2021; Orme, 2016; Syed, 2023), music and musician fandom (Jameson, 2021; Narendra et al., 2022; Perbawani & Nuralin, 2021; Qorib & Dewi, 2021; Yahya, 2024), and even virtual idol fandoms (Chen & Skey, 2024; Hoesan & Nuraeni, 2023; Lee & Lee, 2023; Liu, 2023; Song et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2023; Zaborowski, 2024). Plave's virtual idol and Plli's fandom have been studied before; there are researchers from Indonesia who talk about Plave's character design and about Plave and Plli's communication patterns (Dewi et al., 2024; Widiasih & Heryanto, 2024). Some studies focus on countries outside Indonesia—such as Korea, the Philippines, and Taiwan—where Plave and Plli are either part of the analysis or the central focus, particularly in relation to virtual idol trends, the social ties between Plave and Plli, and Plli's experiences and perceptions of Plave (Alejandro, 2024; Da-In et al., 2023; So-Yeong, 2023). Scholarly research has also explored norms in fandom (Archer, 2021; Chadborn et al., 2016; Marsh & Lerner, 2023).

However, fandom studies related to norms related to the controlling figure behind the virtual idol avatar still need attention, especially with the Indonesian Plli fandom as the object of study. In addition, the mixture of fan backgrounds, especially in Indonesia, makes me interested in exploring what kind of culture emerges in the Indonesian Plli fandom, especially to ascertain and describe what norms related to Terra Plave apply. A significant number characterizes the existence of Indonesian Pllis through demographic data as well as many Plave-themed events and projects in Indonesia—these projects include giveaways, watching concerts together, raising donations, advertisements and birthday events for Plave members, and others (Gosparkling_id, 2024; Plave_lampung, 2024; PLAVE_TeamINA, 2024; Plaveintl, 2024; Sarrere, 2024; Silvervenus_, 2024; Way4plave_, 2024; Yuhateumin, 2023). This proves that in Indonesia, the Plli fandom is an active fandom and worthy of being used as an object of research. In addition, the phenomenon related to Terra Plave highlighted in this research is also seen in the Indonesian Plli fandom virtual space.

Drawing on a phenomenological framework, this study primarily seeks to understand how the Indonesian Plli fandom in virtual spaces interacts with norms related to Terra Plave and how technological mediation shapes communal and affective dimensions of fandom, with the hope of contributing to bridging qualitative studies across the social sciences, humanities, and technology. In Indonesia itself, digital culture is currently taking root and flourishing within communities, accompanied by a growing awareness of the need to preserve cultural heritage while embracing digital transformation and its rapid spread (Hafizhah, 2024; Sari et al., 2020; Sobandi & Triyanto, 2021). The discussion of norms in this research is about a norm that is believed to apply both to the side of the Plli fandom that knows and the side that does not know about Terra Plave. This research also intends to map the negotiations that arise and are conducted by Indonesian fans against the norms regarding Terra Plave in virtual space. I will limit my research focus to the Indonesian side of the Plli fandom in the virtual space of social media X, which implies obtaining perspectives from middle-class Indonesian fans who are assumed to be educated and critical (Comm, 2010; Himayah, 2020; Jati, 2016; Kurniawan et al., 2020; Oktaviani et al., 2022).

Another reason for choosing X is the presence of PLLI BASE (@pllibase), which only exists on X social media as an *autobase/menfess* account. Often found on X in Indonesia, autobase accounts, better known as menfess (abbreviation of mention and confess), are accounts where users can send and upload anonymous messages on the menfess accounts' timelines, with the condition that a user's account and a menfess account must be mutually following each other (Caroline & Triana, 2025; Dwiwina & Putri, 2021). PLLI BASE has Indonesians as the account managers, and the majority of its followers are also Indonesians, also evidenced by at least 90% of anonymous posts as well as interactions with posts on the base being in Indonesian. Through these facts, I see that PLLI BASE can be assumed to be an Indonesian fan base, and the number of PLLI BASE followers (i.e., 9,251 followers as of May 07, 2025) can be used as a minimum outline reference for the number of Plli fanbases in Indonesia. This number fulfills the minimum requirements for informants for phenomenological research as described by Creswell and Poth (2018), which will be applied to this research method. This research offers novelty in the form of a point of view from the Plli fandom that is expected to broaden insights into the diversity of dynamics in fandom in the virtual world.

Methods

This research adopted Creswell & Poth's (2018) phenomenological qualitative approach for data collection, analysis, and presentation. Phenomenology was chosen because the technique can be used to provide an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon as experienced by some individuals (Creswell & Poth, 2018), thus, the collected data emphasizes on the participants' meaning-making processes more than purely behavior patterns. On the other hand, qualitative inquiry provides methods for systematically interpreting those meanings. By employing the qualitative method, phenomenology's emphasis on lived experience, and placing focus on a virtual idol (Plave) fandom in a technologically mediated fandom

space, this research explores how fans within the fandom experience and construct community norms regarding Terra Plave while also bridging empirical observation of online fan practices with interpretive humanistic analysis. This methodological crossover is considered suited to research on virtual idol fandoms, where technological and social dimensions intertwine in shaping norms as a component of fan identities (Parsakia & Jafari, 2023).

Data collection was conducted entirely online through a semi-structured phenomenological interview technique with general, open-ended primary questions to four Pllis as informants. Primary questions asked included (1) their origins and reasons for being Plli; (2) their experiences of Terra Plave-related phenomena and typical contexts/situations influencing those experiences; (3) the origins of knowing Terra Plave for those who know and reasons for not knowing for those who do not know Terra Plave; (4) perceived obstacles when doing virtual activities in X as Plli who know/don't know Terra Plave; (5) what norms are perceived to apply regarding Terra Plave in virtual spaces, especially on the social media X, and their attitudes towards those norms. Semi-structured interviews were conducted so the informants' answers to each question could be explored in depth (Andina, 2019). The number of informants, as many as four people, was determined to fulfill the criteria for identifying heterogeneous groups in phenomenological research based on the formulation of Creswell and Poth (2018).

Plli individuals were selected as informants if they met several criteria, namely: (1) being an Indonesian citizen; (2) actively liking Plave and considering themselves as Plli; (3) having an X account for online activities as Plli; (4) being willing to be in a documented interview and contacted further during the research; (5) knowing/not knowing Terra Plave. These criteria were incorporated into a Google Form survey as a medium to gather potential informants. The survey was distributed twice (on December 19, 2024, and February 01, 2025) only on X through anonymous posts on PLLI BASE (@pllibase) as an automated menfess base. From 119 survey respondents, four Pllis with different backgrounds were selected (Table 1).

Table I Selected Plli Informants as Subjects of Research

No.	Name	Age, Sex, Domicile, and Occupation	Duration of Being a Plli	Fandom(s) Background	Knowledge about Terra Plave
1	Informant 1	21, unlabeled, West Java, undergraduate student (major unspecified)	More than 6 months	Never entered any fandom before but was a casual enjoyer of Korean variety show (Running Man), human-form idol (Infinite; NCT), anime	Knows
2	Informant 2	22, female, East Java, bachelor's in Law	More than 6 months	Human-form idol (The Boyz), anime, manga	Knows
3	Informant 3	22, female, West Java, worker with a bachelor's degree in Japanese Literature	More than 6 months	Japanese and Chinese digital games (Touken Ranbu; Ensemble Stars; Punishing: Gray Raven)	Does not know
4	Informant 4	21, female, West Java, undergraduate student (major unspecified)	More than 6 months	Human-form idol (Utaite: Mafumafu, Eve, amatsuki, Urata, Ado, 96neko, yukimura), virtual-form idol (Vocaloid; VTuber [KizunaAi; Nijisanji ID: Hana macchia, Taka Radjiman, All Clover McOver, Reza Avanluna, Mika Melatika; Nijisanji JP: Kanae, Kenmochi Toya, Kuzuha; Nijisanji EN: Luxiem, Noctyx; Hololive ID: Ayunda Risu; Hololive JP: Okayu, Korone, Pekora, Marine, Kiryu Coco]), games (Genshin; Shining Nikki, etc.), comic (manga; manhwa; manhua), anime	Does not know

The selection was made to get a heterogeneous group of informants with different backgrounds so that the viewpoints of both sides of the Plli fandom—those who know about Terra Plave and those who do not—could be known. The selected informants were then contacted personally to be interviewed via Line or WhatsApp. Interviews to collect data were conducted multiple times from February 27, 2025, to March 05, 2025. The accumulated data from the interviews was reduced based on its relevance to the research questions. The data reduction results were then reported and analyzed interpretatively to answer the research questions. Creswell and Poth's (2018) theory regarding phenomenological data analysis procedures was also applied in this study. The research data, the data analysis results, and the conclusions obtained will be presented descriptively. It should be noted that Plave's Terra identity will not be presented because it is not included in this research's purpose.

Results and Discussion

The data analysis following Creswell and Poth's (2018) phenomenological framework led this research to obtain results in the form of two main themes related to the phenomenon of Terra Plave, revealing how informants construct authenticity through technologically mediated interactions. The two main themes are (1) sensitivity and influence of the Terra Plave topic and (2) norms.

Sensitivity and Influence of the Terra Plave Topic

According to the answers of the four informants, it can be seen that, based on their experience, the topic of Terra Plave's identity falls into the realm of inviolable privacy and is indeed sensitive. The informants' experiences regarding the sensitivity of Terra Plave's topic indicated that their fandom background significantly influenced them before becoming a Plli and/or familiarity with the concept of VTubers and/or the world of virtual identity. Along with Informant 4, who had previously been a part of the virtual idol fandom, Informants 2 and 3, who had never liked a virtual idol and entered into the virtual idol fandom, claimed that they were familiar with the concept of VTubers.

It appears that three informants (2, 3, and 4) have similar assumptions that accompany their understanding of the sensitivity and private nature of Plave's Terra topic, i.e., Plave could have applied the virtual concept for various reasons other than being attractive, such as for the safety and/or comfort of Terra Plave not to show their non-virtual face. On the other hand, Informant 1, who has never been in any fandom, has never liked virtual idols, has never known VTubers at all before Plave, and is not familiar with the concept of VTuber, has a different opinion. They believed that Plave did not want to keep their Terra identity private or feel ashamed of their Terra identity but instead wanted to become virtual idols and be loved as virtual characters.

Informant 1

Informant 1 said that they could find the identity of Terra Plave because they independently dug up information and found out about them. This action was not only based on curiosity, which was most likely influenced by the anime media culture (character voice actors are known to the public) Informant 1 consumed, but also by their view of the virtual idol entity Plave and the figure of Terra, which they thought were interrelated and connected—Informant 1 felt that being grateful to Plave as a virtual idol was not enough, so they also wanted to know Terra Plave to give their gratitude and thanks as well.

According to the informant, finding out about Terra Plave is challenging because the Plli fandom guards' information as private. After discovering and confirming Terra Plave's identity, Informant 1 mentioned that they did not know these people at all before. They also felt that their knowledge of Terra Plave had little effect on their perspective of the Plave and their overall experience as a Plli, because what they like is the voices of the Plave members. However, Informant 1 felt that they saw a contradiction between Vlast's policy to maintain the privacy of Terra Plave and the behavior and content of some

Plave members who did not seem to mind if their Terra identities were leaked. Thus, for Informant 1, the concept of Plave and the person behind the virtual avatar still confuses whether to be covered. “... *membingungkan menjadi Plli yang udah tau irl Plave.*” (... it is confusing to be a Plli who already knows Terra Plave).

Informant 1 also thought that warnings from other fans influenced their conception of Terra Plave’s identity as private and sensitive. Informant 1 also felt confused and strange about their situation, knowing Terra Plave, because it contradicted other fans’ wishes, who considered Terra Plave’s identity sensitive. Informant 1 did not feel that way before. In the end, Informant 1 tried to respect Vlast’s policy and inevitably followed other fans’ wishes because they only wanted the best for Plave. They decided to support Terra Plave by trying to enjoy and support them as virtual idols only. Informant 1 also mostly interacts with Plave members’ posts while setting their account as private.

Informant 2

Informant 2 became familiar with and considered the concept of virtual idols similar to VTubers based on her knowledge of VTubers (Kobo Kanaeru and Harris Caine) and virtual idols (Vocaloid Hatsune Miku). At first, Informant 2 did not feel curious about Terra Plave. According to her, this may have been influenced by her familiarity with VTubers and anime, so she thought she already understood the concept of Plave. In addition, Informant 2 also saw that the concept of Plave as a virtual idol was highly guarded by both fans and Vlast, as evidenced by the provision of a Google Form by Vlast for reports regarding the doxxing of Terra Plave and the presence of some fans who did not like the discussion of Terra Plave. As such, Informant 2 took the topic of Terra Plave for granted and did not seek information about it. However, Informant 2 later found out about Terra Plave accidentally/randomly through content that suddenly appeared on her social media timeline.

The content was assumed to have occurred as a result of Informant 2’s friends talking about Terra Plave even without explicitly referring to it as Terra Plave (Informant 2 did not question this because her friends uploaded on private accounts and they had previously given Informant 2 a disclaimer that they would discuss Terra Plave on their private accounts, although at that time Informant 2 did not know which one was Terra Plave). Informant 2’s curiosity was piqued, prompting her to seek more information and further confirm her knowledge of Terra Plave. Just like Informant 1, Informant 2 also admitted that after learning the identity of Terra Plave, she confirmed that she did not know these people at all before. In terms of perspective, Informant 2’s views before and after learning about Terra Plave did not change for her, Plave is still an exceptionally talented idol group.

The knowledge of Terra Plave has had some influence on Informant 2’s experience as a fan. Namely, over time Informant 2 tends to see Plave and their Terra figures as the same person, although there are times when she sees them as two different figures. She also became more emotional whenever she saw Plave being belittled by other idol fans. In addition, Informant 2 is also encouraged to support Plave and their Terra figures, because knowledge about Terra Plave makes Informant 2 love them even more and want to continue to support them. In doing activities in X, some of the obstacles felt by Informant 2 are the difficulty of getting Terra Plave content (assumedly because they are busy with their activities as Plave), it was difficult to find friends who already knew Terra Plave, and felt the dislike of some fans in the Plli fandom towards the existence of accounts specifically for Terra Plave.

With regard to the phenomenon related to the topic of Terra Plave that Informant 2 experienced and considered to be very sensitive, Informant 2 also thought that the increase also influenced her experience in the number of Plave fans, which gave rise to some naughty fans (because they discussed Plave and their Terra figures on one account). She assumed that these naughty fans were unfamiliar with the concept of virtuality (which, according to Informant 2, means hiding one’s identity behind a virtual avatar and letting no one know who that person is as much as possible) and thus acted in this way, which to Informant 2 was tantamount to disrespecting Plave’s virtual concept. According to Informant 2, this is one factor

that divided the Plli fandom into two groups (fans who know and fans who do not know and do not want to know about Terra Plave). Then, Informant 2 also admitted that sometimes, there are moments when she thinks that using one account to talk about Plave and Terra is the right of the account owner. However, considering that it could trigger curiosity for fans who do not know about Terra Plave, Informant 2 still created a separate/special account to talk about Terra Plave while being careful not to discuss Terra Plave on the same account to discuss Plave as a virtual idol.

Informant 3

Prior to liking Plave, Informant 3's knowledge of the concept of virtual idols was gained from the Japanese virtual idol fandoms that her friends entered (Hololive and Vocaloid). Informant 3 tends to view Plave and their Terra figures as two different and unrelated identities, so she does not see any obligation to know who the person behind Plave's virtual avatar is. In addition, because the topic of Terra Plave is sensitive to her and she believes that digging up information about Terra Plave is unethical and unkind, Informant 3 avoids and does not want to know about Terra Plave out of respect for Plave and their decision to debut as a virtual idol.

According to Informant 3, in addition to her familiarity with the concept of VTubers, her experience was mainly influenced by her ownership of virtual identities and her personal view—that the virtual world and the real world are two different places—which made Informant 3 aware of the sensitive topic of Terra Plave because it involves the privacy of the person behind their virtual identity. During her activities as a Plli on social media X, Informant 3 believes that two things have been a source of obstacles for her. The first is that once someone talks about Terra Plave, more people will talk about it (either as a reminder or soft-doxing [which is discussing the figure of Terra and their activities implicitly in Plave-dedicated account and vice versa] or doxing). Because of this, Informant 3 became very wary of the algorithm, which she feared would cause trouble to her by making her aware of Terra Plave. The second thing is that the existence of fans who discuss Plave and Terra in one account also makes Informant 3 feel like a limitation. This is because this type of fan made her no longer want to accept multifandom accounts, with the fear that these multifandom accounts also included Terra Plave.

Informant 4

When asked about her perspective on Plave and Terra Plave, Informant 4 views them as two different external identities, but they are related because one individual owns both identities. Personal experiences influenced Informant 4's experiences with Terra Plave-related phenomena in previous fandoms. Informant 4 said that she was surprised and felt a culture shock regarding the person behind the virtual avatar in the Plli fandom, where many fans (to Informant 4's knowledge) claimed to know Terra Plave's face, and there was "Plli" soft doxing. This situation is different from the situation in Informant 4's previous fandoms, especially the VTubers fandom and Utaite fandom, where information about the person behind the avatar/pseudonymous identity, including the face, will not be spread unless the idol themselves reveals it.

According to Informant 4, cultural differences regarding the controlling figure of virtual idol avatars in the Plli, VTuber, and Utaite fandoms could be due to the mixing of fans with different fandom backgrounds in the Plli fandom. Particularly with regard to the human-form K-pop idol fandom, she mentioned that fans often talk about members' visuals. There is also the existence of "*sasaeng*," who are fans who are so curious about their idol's activities that they violate the idol's privacy boundaries (examples described by Informant 4 include stalking the idol while the idol is on vacation; [in the context of virtual idols] finding out and spreading the identity of the controller of their favorite virtual idol avatar, etc.). Thus, Informant 4 concluded that this might be why Plli, who previously belonged to the K-pop idol fandom, tended to be curious about Terra Plave's visuals.

On the other hand, despite feeling very curious, Informant 4 is committed to not actively seeking information about the face behind virtual idol personas like Plave. There are three reasons why Informant

4 does not want to know about Terra Plave. Apart from being respectful of idols and their desire not to show their faces, Informant 4 believes that not knowing about Terra Plave makes her experience as a fan more enjoyable and allows her to focus more on Plave's traits and talents. Another reason is that she thinks idols can feel more comfortable interacting with their fans if the fans respect their wishes or opinions. When doing virtual activities, especially on social media X, Informant 4 felt obstacles in the form of fear of doxxing content that was considered dangerous for Plave and fear of Pllis who openly followed Terra Plave, because both of these things can open up space for the emergence of sasaeng/haters who will disrupt Terra Plave's life.

Norms

Several norms related to Terra Plave are considered to apply within the Plli fandom, particularly in the X social media space. The answers from the four informants emphasise two similar points, namely, related to the accounts used and the actions against provocative posts and doxxing.

Accounts used

Fans who already know Terra Plave are encouraged to keep the information to themselves and not share it. However, they are asked to keep their accounts separate if they want to support and talk about Terra Plave. When being Plave on social media, fans are asked to support Plave as a virtual idol and are prohibited from bringing up anything related to Terra Plave. Conversely, it is also forbidden to call the name of the Plave member when interacting with their Terra figures, especially using the photo of the Plave member as the profile picture of the account used to interact. Fans are also not allowed to do soft doxxing. Informant 2 gave an example of behavior that included soft doxxing in the form of when Plave was talking about the gym, fans then made posts on the account specifically for their Terra figures about the same thing related to the gym.

Action on Provocative Posts and Doxxing

If provocative posts related to Plave's visuals are encountered, fans are encouraged not to reply or interact with them and simply leave them alone. Especially for fans who do not know Terra Plave, they are emphasized not to be provoked by things like "Plave face reveal" or "Irl Plave face," considering that there is no confirmation from Vlast or members regarding these things. So, when finding these uploads, fans are prohibited from interacting with either the uploader's account or the upload and should immediately make a report to the Google Form link provided by Vlast while reporting and blocking the perpetrator's X account. Then, for fans who already know Terra Plave, when they find uploads that show the figure of Terra Plave with the aim of doxxing, they are not encouraged to reply again with doxxing. Instead, fans are encouraged to immediately block and report the uploader along with the upload evidence that indicates Terra Plave's identity has been leaked to X and to the Google Form link that Vlast has facilitated.

From the answers obtained from the four informants, it can be seen that they all try to comply with the norms that are considered applicable. As for fans who do not know Terra Plave, Informants 3 and 4 both said that they take precautions not to know Terra Plave and avoid fans who do not comply with the norms. Both Informants 3 and 4 apply selective following habits to keep their timelines "clean" because they only contain people with the same interests. They also do not hesitate to block/mute people indicated as malware (meaning Plave's anti (Peuldoongnuna & Manddediddi, n.d.) and doxxing Terra Plave. In addition, there were some extra precautions taken by Informant 3, such as muting the word "Terra Plave" and taking a break from looking at the for your timeline (she only looked at the following timeline) when she heard rumors about Terra Plave doxxing.

When answering the interview questions, Informant 4 used quotes (“Plli”) to refer to fans who soft-doxed Plave and the Terra figures. In addition, Informant 2 also labeled fans who discussed Plave and Terra in one account as “naughty fans,” which Informant 2 considered bad and disrespectful to Plave’s virtual concept. These two things show that the prevailing Plli fandom norms function as a reference for fans to determine behaviors, practices, and attitudes that are considered good/appropriate towards Terra Plave in social media X as a virtual space.

On the other hand, behaviors that go against the norm (e.g., talking about Plave and their Terra figures in one account, [soft] doxxing, etc.) will be considered bad/inappropriate behavior. Moreover, even in the Plli fandom, norms serve as a prerequisite for a fan to be accepted in a community—if their actions do not conform to the norms, the fan does not get the same label as if they were not fully considered part of a community. So, it seems that the function of norms related to Terra Plave in the Plli fandom aligns with Danis and Lee’s (2002) explanation: norms serve as a prerequisite for whether someone is accepted into a community, and through them, individuals can know how to behave. Then, the thought that Informant 2 sometimes has, that discussing Plave and their Terra figures in one account is the right of the account owner, does not seem to be the same as the thoughts of other fans, and implies that it is legal/not wrong to do. This also aligns with Stewart’s (2023) argument regarding the concept of appropriate fandom, namely that there are different understandings of right and wrong related to being and behaving as a fan.

Another thing is that Vlast’s official statement about the prohibition of spreading information about Terra Plave can be seen as one of the set rules by the Plli fandom. Therefore, the interest of the side of fans who know and want to talk about Terra Plave is hindered, while the side of fans who do not know Terra Plave still wants their fandom space not to be “contaminated” and still conform to the conditions promoted by Vlast’s policy. However, Vlast did not create rules to resolve the conflict of interest. Thus, both sides of fans in the fandom can be seen as negotiating an adjustment to the prevailing norms, i.e. fans who still want to talk about Terra Plave should do so on a separate account. This is in line with Lewicki et al.’s (2024) theory of negotiation, which states that a process undertaken by two or more to resolve opposing interests occurs because there is no fixed procedure or set of rules to resolve the conflict (Lewicki et al., 2024).

Conclusion

Based on the description of the answers from each informant, it appears that the assumptions of this research, that different backgrounds affect the various perceptions and understandings among fans about Terra Plave, the norms related to Terra Plave, and/or how fans respond to them, have been confirmed to be true. In addition, the norms that are considered to apply in social media X as a virtual space emphasise account usage as well as actions against provocative posts and doxxing. The norms related to the use of different accounts that are considered applicable are actually a form of negotiation by both sides (knowing and not knowing Terra Plave) in the Plli fandom as a form of resolving their conflict of interest, namely adjusting the official statement from Vlast as the company that houses Plave. Thus, it is concluded that the findings in this study support the arguments presented regarding norms and negotiation, appropriate fandom, and negotiation.

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