

Voting Campaign in Award Events: A Netnographic Study of Salma Salsabil's Fanbase on X

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Abstract

This study investigates the voting campaign initiated by Salma Salsabil's fanbase during award events, using the netnography method to examine the digital fan interaction and culture on X. Data were gathered through a crawling process using NoLimit Dashboard, focusing on selected keywords, hashtags, and relevant accounts involved in the conversation. This study shows that Salma's voting campaign generated 493 conversations, 213 speakers, 563,000 views, 186,400 reaches, and 615,500 impressions, indicating a high level of engagement and digital visibility. These results show how coordinated fan practices foster collective solidarity and contribute to Salma Salsabil's achievements at national and international award ceremonies. In addition, this study reveals that to strengthen fan loyalty and expand support for local artists in the digital realm, the use of social media is essential.

Keywords: Voting campaign, Fanbase netnography, Social Media, Digital Fan Culture

INTRODUCTION

Rapid technological advancements have increased the ease with which information circulates among us. In this context, social media has become a tool for shaping public opinion and influencing many aspects of life, including the entertainment industry. According to Li (2024), one phenomenon that has emerged in the current digital era is the presence of fan communities (fanbases), which are increasingly active in supporting their idols. These communities gather through social media, forming a strong communication network among fans. They can easily interact, share information, and organize themselves to support their idols through social media platforms. This phenomenon is evident in award events that involve fan participation through digital platforms, in which fans are required to contribute to the voting process to support their idols

Fans actively participate in voting campaigns to build collective identity within their communities. According to Kaya et al., (2023) platforms such as social media become a platform for fans to interact directly with idol-related content, strengthening loyalty and facilitating organized mobilization that can

influence award outcomes, including according to Tan (2024) he stated in his research that through structured voting activities, fans can demonstrate collective loyalty while strengthening solidarity and emotional bonds, making voting campaigns a medium to strengthen the identity of the fan base in the digital space, similar to the participatory culture found in popular Korean culture fan communities

A similar phenomenon was also found in Indonesia. There is a group of fans of a local artist who became famous after winning the 12th season of Indonesian Idol on RCTI, named Salma Salsabil. Her fanbase is called Salmine. Based on pre-research conducted from October to December 2024, the findings show that throughout the last two years, specifically 2023–2024, Salma received various awards due to her strong fan engagement, including coordinated voting efforts, the popularity of her songs on digital streaming platforms like Spotify, and others.

Table 1. Awards Won by Salma Salsabil and her fan community (Salmine) in 2023-2024

No.	Award	Category	Nomination
1.	Pop Asia Awards 2023	Most Viral Song on TikTok	Salma Salsabil (Bunga Hati)
2.	Voks Radio Awards 2023	1. Most Played Newcomer Song 2. Most-Played Pop Song	Salma Salsabil (Cherishing the Word 'Longing')
3.	Mustang Awards 2023 Survey	1. Most Promising Artist 2. Most Supported Fanbase	1. Salma Salsabil 2. Salmine (Official Fanbase of Salma Salsabil)
4.	Go Spot Awards 2023	Rising Singer of the Year	Salma Salsabil
5.	Silet Awards 2023	Most Promising Newcomer	Salma Salsabil
6.	The Amazing Awards 2023	Most Amazing Newcomer	Salma Salsabil
7.	Indonesian Television Awards 2023	Most Popular Television Newcomer	Salma Salsabil
8.	Asian Television Awards 2024	Most Popular Solo Female Performer (Jupiter Music Awards)	Salma Salsabil
9.	Indonesian Music Awards 2024	1. Breakthrough Artist of the Year 2. Female Singer of the Year	Salma Salsabil

10.	Spotify Wrapped 2024	Indonesia Top Radar Artist of the Year	Salma Salsabil
11.	Indonesian Music Awards 2024	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Best Female Pop Solo Artist 2. Best Production Work 3. Best Sound Production Team 4. Best Recording Producer 5. Best Music Director 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Salma Salsabil 2. Salma Salsabil (Bunga Hati) 3. Dimas Pradipta (Bunga Hati – Salma Salsabil) 4. S/EEK (Bunga Hati – Salma Salsabil) 5. S/EEK (Bunga Hati – Salma Salsabil)

Source: Researchers' Immersion Notes on X @salmine.official account, 2024.

The above achievements show that Salma and her fanbase occupy a strategic position in the Indonesian entertainment industry. They use social media not only to interact parasocially with their idols but also to expand their support by coordinating campaigns and strengthening their collective identity in the digital realm for Salma. Based on immersion notes from researchers in October 2024, the Salmine fan community has established a broad network across multiple platforms, with 115,000 followers on Instagram, 25,900 on X, 37,200 on TikTok, 16,500 listeners on Stationhead, and 9,904 members in their Telegram group. Upon further review, they are most active on public social media, namely X (formerly Twitter), especially in the last three months during the voting period for award shows, as explained by Mawardha and Purnamasari (2022), who highlight the effectiveness of digital platforms in fan mobilization and integrated communication.

Many previous studies have discussed voting campaigns within fan communities during the award nomination process. Roslan et al. (2024) in their study discussed that effective vote mobilization depends on fans' trust in their community, idols, and digital platforms, and this was found in the K-pop fanbase. According to Achsanty, Kusuma, & Kom (2021), in Korea, a country nicknamed the land of ginseng, there are many popular cultural activities, one of which is award events that require fans to vote on certain platforms, invite other fans to join, and support their idols. This is reflected by fans of the boy group BTS. Research by Winarto & Hambalah (2023) found that ARMY fanbase often votes for their idols and functions as a volunteer promotion that increases BTS's visibility and success. Similar to a study by Walczer & Baird (2020), which examined the Dear Evan Hansen Fansens community, found out that they organize creative engagement and voting campaigns to support their favorite artists as well.

Furthermore, research by Raharjo and Kusuma (2024) on digital activism by WOTA, the term for JKT48 fans, shows that online campaigns and promotions are also used to support and increase the popularity of their idols.

This phenomenon is further reinforced by a study by Okditazeini (2023), who highlighted that fans today can be described as "digital workers" on social media, actively participating in promoting their idols at award events because they collectively support their idols in these events. This can be interpreted as how the fan community utilizes digital platforms to fight for their idols' victory in award events involving their idols. Lastly, there is a study that discusses the Twitter account @ARMYTEAMIID functioning as an account that discusses technical matters in voting, with the fan community using it to provide information and instructions to other ARMY members on how to participate in voting campaigns. (Yuniasti and Kusumastuti, 2021)

However, existing research has focused solely on international fanbases, particularly among K-pop fans, and has focused more on the digital activism and commodification of fanbases for voting purposes. Consequently, no research has utilized netnographic methods or explored how fanbases interact and how culture shapes voting for their idols, or how this voting activity can strengthen solidarity and bonds among fans on social media platforms. Furthermore, no research has explored this phenomenon in depth within the context of an Indonesian artist's fanbase. This research aims to fill a gap by examining the dynamics of Salmine Fanbase's digital interactions, culture, and collective mobilization during the voting campaign.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Fanbase

A fanbase is a group of people who demonstrate high loyalty and commitment to certain solo artist or group, they have a power to support their idol. Fan community nowadays also actively promotes their favorite idol on social media through various online campaigns, including hashtag party, content creation, streaming their work on digital platforms, and other community-based activities both online and offline. According to research by Jenkins (2016), which found that a group of fans can be used as a collective force that can significantly shape an artist's image through consistent support on social media. In addition, a fan community encourages interactive spaces that enhance communication between artists and fans, thereby strengthening the movement's bonds or weakening fan loyalty.

Social Media

Social media is a place that facilitates the process of two-way mutual interaction with each other, in line with research from Bungin (2008) that social media is a tool to accommodate people to gather, discuss in a cyber community. Furthermore, social media is also very accessible to many people, ranging from young to adults, especially in the midst of a very massive development of the times. In the entertainment industry, social media plays a crucial role in shaping artists' image while maintaining fan loyalty. In line with this view, a study by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) argues that social media engages artists in more personal interactions with their audiences (parasocial

relationships), which ultimately contributes to strengthening their brand image as artists and fan loyalty.

Digital Fan Culture

Digital fan culture is a collection of fan activities that are produced in the digital age, usually on social media. They gather not only to idolize their idols but also to participate in producing, deliberating, and making campaigns to increase the popularity of their idols. Social media such as Twitter and Instagram became a forum for them to come together to promote content and campaigns that they produced themselves, features such as comment columns, and discussion sessions finally made them more bonded with their idols (Hills & Black, 2021)

METHODOLOGY

The method used in this research is Netnography, as proposed by Kozinets (2020), to examine the Salmine fanbase's digital interactions and culture on X. This method enables researchers to conduct online observation without direct intervention. However, researchers employed social engagement, as explained by Eriyanto and Asril (2011), whereby they actively participated in the fanbase's conversations. This engagement approach was applied to gain a deeper understanding of the social dynamics, interaction patterns, and communicative practices operating within the community.

Research data were collected through a crawl using the NoLimit Dashboard, focusing on selected keywords, hashtags, and accounts associated with Salmine fanbase. In addition, this study adopted a qualitative approach within a constructivist paradigm that emphasizes in-depth, interpretive analysis drawn from multiple perspectives and complex social realities in digital interactions (Wekke, 2019; Sukadinata, 2009).

To contextualize the patterns of digital interaction and culture among Salma Salsabil's fanbase, the researchers identified object assessments such as keywords such as Salmine, Salnas, Salmine Nasional, Salreg, Salmine Regional, Salmine Creators, Salmastream, Satreamine, Arek Salma, Salvoting Salmachardata, Forthesal, and Zuppasoupmine. Then for the hashtags #MenghargaiKataRinduSalma, #BungaHatiSalmaSalsabil, #RumahSalmaSalsabil, #BolehJugaSalmaSalsabil, #AffalyahSalmaSalsabil, and #RANxSalmaSalsabil. Lastly, for the accounts studied, the following are @OfficialSalmine, @salmastreams, @salminecreators, @salvotingteam, @salmaaudiomusic, and @salmachartdata.

Data collection was collected between October and December 2025. This period was chosen based on the researchers' immersion notes, which showed a significant increase in online activity during the last three months of the year, especially during Salma's numerous awards and trophy wins. The big data will then be further analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) to identify themes and interaction patterns emerging from the communication practices and collective strategies of fan support for Salma at award events.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first finding that the researcher obtained was a metric overview from the NoLimit Dashboard related to the Salmine fanbase conversation on X, which had been adjusted to the object assessments. This made it easier to analyze and identify emerging trends, interaction patterns, growing social and cultural dynamics, conversation intensity, and digital artifacts in the Salma Salsabil fan community on X.

Figure 1. The Display of Salmine Fanbase Conversation Metrics

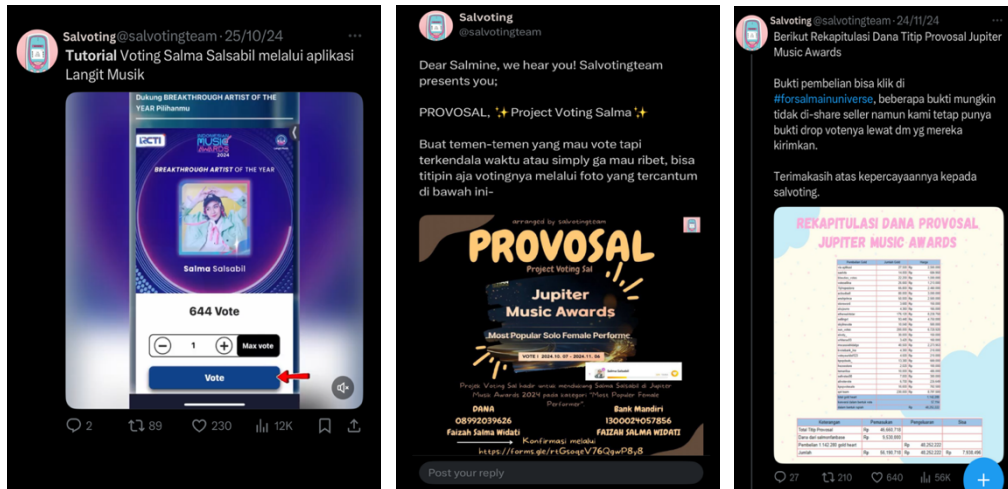


Source: NoLimit Dashboard (2025)

The image above shows the conversation metrics from Salma Salsabil's fan community that has high engagement and the level of communication reach achieved over the last 3 months in 2024. All of this data is collected through the NoLimit Dashboard by 2025, and further analyzed using thematic analysis from Braun and Clarke (2021) to examine the big data obtained from the NoLimit Dashboard, which identified the theme of the voting campaign among Salma Salsabil's fanbase in X during the awards event. The campaign resulted in 493 conversations involving 213 unique participants, generating 563,000 views, 186,400 reaches, and 615,500 impressions, demonstrating strong participation and digital influence. These activities demonstrate Salma Salsabil's fans' high level of voter engagement and ability to build online solidarity and collective mobilization across digital platforms.

Immersion notes from researchers further highlight @salvotingteam accounts on X as the main leader in coordinating these efforts through information dissemination, technical voting guidelines, and regular reminders. Similar to Sandi & Triastuti's (2020) study, which found that fanbases can facilitate organized participation and emotional engagement, thus contributing to concrete achievements for idols.

Figure 2. Salvoting's Posts about Voting Tutorial & Provosal Program



Source: Immersion Notes from Researchers (2025)

Figure 2 shows the three posts from @salvotingteam account as key actors who provided technical guidance and strategic information in the voting campaign for Salma Salsabil. Through the above uploads, this account actively conveys the technical aspects of voting, such as step-by-step tutorials, direct links to the voting system, and guides to use certain applications, so that fans can understand and execute the voting procedures correctly. In addition, the Salvoting account consistently disseminates information related to award events involving Salma and her songs included in the nominations. The account also initiated the "Provosal" (Project Vote for Salma) program that encourages fan participation through fundraising activities by providing information on donation methods, as well as transparency of funding allocations for Salma's voting at events such as the 2024 Jupiter Music Awards. The Salvoting team also coordinates strategies such as the use of "cattle accounts" and the practice of "mulung" to maximize the daily free voting quota.

Image 4. Salmine's post regarding hashtag party



Source: Immersion Notes from Researchers (2025)

The image above shows two posts from Salmine supporting Salma Salsabil at the 2024 Indonesian Music Awards (AMI Awards). The first post from @gluckyyy_ uses the hashtag #SalmaSalsabilDiAMI Awards2024 to express her support and to organize a coordinated digital campaign to have one voice, similar to the findings of Fikri et al. (2025) that the hashtag party is a collective solidarity among Salmine for her idol. The second tweet from @secretlo0vers congratulates Salma on her win as Best Female Pop Solo Artist and strengthens fan identity through two hashtags #AMI Awards and #SalmaSalsabil. These two posts show how hashtags organize online conversations, increase visibility, and strengthen fan-idol relationships, in line with the findings of Naraine et al. (2021) on the strategic role of hashtags in digital campaigns.

Figure 5. "Sal Eh! Brasi Salma Traktir Salmine" Event



Source: Immersion Notes from Researchers (2025)

This support was also evident at the "Sal Eh! Brasi Salma Traktir Salmine" event organized by Salma at the end of December 2024. According to the researchers' immersion notes, on December 28, 2024, Salma held a special and intimate event in Jakarta with her fans, where only 20 Salmine were selected

through a “war” process that required them to fill in their details via Google Form. During the event, Salmine were warmly welcomed and well served, and had the opportunity to sing and eat with Salma. One of the rooms at the event location was also specially designed to display Salma's trophies, complete with decorations depicting her hit songs. This event also served as a moment to express gratitude for Salma's achievements in bringing home dozens of trophies in 2024, which is undoubtedly the result of the extraordinary support from her fans.

CONCLUSION

This study found that Salmine's fans play a significant role in voting for their idol, Salma Salsabil, in national and international music awards, according to data from Dashboard of NoLimit. A significant amount of data was collected, including 493 talks, 213 talkers, and 9 million people's impressions. This metric illustrates Salmine's many involvements in the campaign, and the primary actor is the @salvotingteam account, which serves as an intermediary between Salmine. They also gave Salmine directions, provided technical guidance for voting, and reminded Salmine not to miss the opportunity to participate in voting. In addition, they also have a 'Provosal' tactic to raise funds, a 'mulung' and 'account cattle' strategy to increase the number of votes collected. Furthermore, they effectively use social media to spread awareness and generate rewards, highlighting the power of social media to strengthen fan loyalty and increase support for local artists.

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