

Project Work Written Report

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Title: An analysis of Mukbang and its romanticisation of unhealthy eating behaviours

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 General Background

Mukbang is defined as an online audiovisual broadcast in which the host consumes large quantities of food, either as a challenge or simply for pleasure, while interacting with the audience. (Sacacas 2021). The word Mukbang (먹방; meokbang) is a portmanteau of the Korean words for "eating" (먹는; meokneun) and "broadcast" (방송; bangsong). (Evans 2014) An English morphological equivalent could be eatcast. The trend of Mukbang has seen significant development over the years since its origins in the 2000s, brought into the limelight over a sudden and unexplainable craze. It has been studied or understood otherwise as having derived from “the loneliness of unmarried or uncoupled Koreans, in addition to the inherently social aspects of eating in Korea” (Quartz 2016). Korean culture displays the customary mindset that the activity of dining is deeply and necessarily social. Hence, it is unsurprising that many Koreans find it almost unthinkable to sit and eat alone, not least in public. Therefore, Mukbang has been described as a virtual substitute for socialisation while viewers are subjected to the notion of unaccompanied consumption (Jackson 2018). The aforementioned trend has risen by leaps and bounds in terms of popularity in recent years, with many social media influencers scrambling to get a stake in this extreme internet phenomenon which is still gaining traction. Currently, Mukbang content can be easily accessed on mainstream social media platforms, such as Youtube, Twitch, Tik Tok etc. (Strand 2020).

1.2 Rationale:

It is becoming increasingly evident that society sometimes overlooks the health concerns that come inseparably with morbid obesity, and find trouble discerning the grey area between rational body positivity and romanticising unhealthy eating practices. The trend of Mukbang romanticises what I believe is an undesirable eating culture, leading to a disregard for numerous severe health issues, such as morbid obesity. According to Ketrell. McWhorter (2020), culture, society, social media, and reality shows have all influenced society's perception of obesity, outpacing influential and well-established clinical definitions and medical advice warning of the cardiometabolic risks of obesity. Viewers, especially younger ones, whilst enjoying the engaging content provided undoubtedly by Mukbang, also need to realise that the Mukbang culture is an unsuitably idealised eating practice, and should not be adopted as a lifestyle. The risks and dangers come in when viewers are unable to avert and exterminate unconscious feelings of attachment and idealisation towards such superfluous and possibly unsafe methods of food consumption. Therefore, with this in mind, it is of pivotal importance that more is needed to be done to further explore the inexplicit but very existent ways that Mukbang utilises, knowingly or unknowingly, to romanticise this form of unhealthy eating culture before uncontrollable consequences are formed. I also hope to discover the exact negative impacts it has in order to properly educate the viewers of Mukbang on the impending

dangers of this internet phenomenon, ensuring that they remain aware of such harmful influences, especially when such content is being disclosed to thousands of global viewers.

1.3 Research Questions:

1. How do the eating practices portrayed in Mukbang affect the dietary habits of its viewers?
2. Following the structuralist film theory, what are the key features of filmography that add appeal to the visual content of Mukbang?

1.4 Thesis Statement:

This paper seeks to inform readers that the Mukbang phenomenon is an undeniable factor that results in the romanticising unhealthy eating culture, through its intrinsic content, aesthetical elements and behavioural habits of its hosts.

1.5 Scope of Research:

The variables for research will include two famed Mukbang influencers, namely Trisha Paytas and Nikocado Avocado (Nicholas Perry). The analysis of the following channels will be done through the lens of the cultivation theory and the social influence theory. Other content from similar Mukbang videos uploaded on various social media platforms such as Youtube and Twitch will also be used due to their prominence, allowing for a greater range of content, as well as response and reactions, to accurately determine the impact of such content on viewers. Key factors that shall be used to determine a video's relevance are the number of views, alignment of comments and the spectrum of reactions towards its content. The cultivation theory and Structuralist Film theory will be referenced and utilised to provide an in-depth analysis of the selected Mukbang videos.

1.6 Significance of Research:

This research will address the negative outcomes of romanticising negative eating habits and how it impacts viewers' perceptions of health concerns regarding eating disorders and obesity. Through the application of The Cultivation Theory and Structuralist Film theory on Mukbang, this research paper will further dive into the analysis of the content in Mukbang videos and the role it plays in romanticising a negative eating culture. Thus, this research will argue that Mukbang is a hidden and undiscovered cause of eating disorders and obesity, and will shed light on how it does so.

1.7 Limitations:

Due to the time frame of the project being a year, the analysis will be centred around the 3 different channels of Mukbang mentioned. Hence, this research may not completely cover the practices of Mukbang culture and its exact psychological influence on the viewers' perception of its content. It is also important to note that there are two ends of the spectrum with regards to Mukbang's content, one having a greater emphasis placed on the food consumption and review, while the other focuses more on the interactions between Mukbang influencers and their guests or viewers, with less emphasis placed on the portion size and variety of the food they are consuming in the videos. This research would primarily focus on videos where the consumption of food is emphasised, and as such the full spectrum of Mukbang content will not be extensively analysed. Hence, the analysis will not claim to be a full and comprehensive portrayal of the entire Mukbang community online. However, the research would still be of relevance as the former type of Mukbang content is more prevalent and has a greater and more adverse impact on viewers' perception of it. Lastly, since only the comments towards Mukbang's content are readily accessible, a comprehensive analysis of viewers' perceptions towards its content may not be achieved. Notwithstanding this, it is still important to note that the comments from viewers would be considered as unfiltered and authentic reactions because these comments come from a safe and protected space of anonymity from the viewers' end, hence the content and opinions inscribed within these comments are relatively credible.

2.0 Preliminary Literature Review:

2.1 Mass Communications

Mass communication is, "the process by which a person, group of people or organization creates a message and transmits it through some type of medium to a large, anonymous, heterogeneous audience." (Pearce 2009) Types of mediums in the current context would refer to social media platforms, with their rise in popularity cementing its place as a viable medium to disseminate information to the general public. The study of mass communication is primarily concerned with how the content of mass communication influences or persuades the behaviour, attitude, opinion, or emotion of those receiving the information, which makes this study viable in my research. There are significant links between the media that is consumed through mass communication and

our culture, which contributes to polarization and divides people based on consequential issues.

There are several means of communication identified in this field of study, but my main focus will be on social media since most Mukbang content is disseminated through this medium. In modern use, social media refers to mediums used on both mobile devices and desktop computers that allow communication and interactions between users through the use of words, pictures, sounds, and video. (Pavlik, John; McIntosh, Shawn 2017) Social media includes popular sites such as Youtube and Twitch, both of which would serve to host most Mukbang content and its influencers. Social Media's use and importance in communications and public relations have developed rapidly in recent years, and it is now a staple in mass-audience advertising. (Elliot 2009) Thus, social media's modern relevance will play a role in further research of viewer's interest in its content.

2.2 Cultivation Theory

Cultivation theory is a sociological and communications framework and is a major theory associated with the study of mass communications. It suggests that people who are regularly exposed to media for long periods are more likely to perceive the world's social realities as they are presented by the media they consume, which in turn affects their attitudes and behaviours. (Karyn 2008) In relation to my study, I will thus be exploring how Mukbang presents a romanticised unhealthy eating culture, and how it is perpetuated through viewers' obsession with Mukbang's content.

Cultivation theory began as a way to test the impact of television on viewers, especially how exposure to violence through television affects human beings. (Quisto 2018) The theory's key proposition is that "the more time people spend 'living' in the television world, the more likely they are to believe social reality aligns with reality portrayed on television." Over the years, this theory was adapted to include other forms of media besides television, and as such in practice, the cultivation theory explains that images and ideological messages transmitted by popular media heavily influence perceptions of the real world. The more media that people consume, the more their perceptions change. (Morgan 2010) Such images and messages, especially when repeated, help bring about the culture that they portray. Therefore, with the uprising of Mukbang's popularity in the world of social media, frequent viewers or "fan bases" of Mukbang would naturally arise. This would lead to greater consumption of Mukbang content, which would allow me to explore whether idealised perceptions of negative

eating practices/habits, such as eating disorders and obesity, in Mukbang will be emphasised or even obsessed among frequent viewers of Mukbang.

2.3 Structuralist Film Theory

Structuralist film theory focuses on how video content expresses meaning through the use of codes and conventions similar to how languages create meaning in communication. However, structuralist film theory differs from linguistic theory in that its codifications incorporate a more prominent temporal component. In other words, the site of study is shifting in time and must be explored within a context that recognizes its temporality. To that end, structuralist film theory is based on the ostensive symbol, a new type of sign first introduced by the Prague linguistic circle.

An ostensive description illustrates the context of a word by using examples. This method of meaning is often used because defining a phrase verbally is challenging, either because the meanings may not be understood (as with children and new speakers of a language) or because of the essence of the term (such as colours or sensations). It is normally accompanied by a gesture pointing to the object being used as an example, and is thus often known as "definition by pointing." (Cambridge 2014) Thus, this theory would be useful in illustrating how Mukbang influencers make use of the different filmography techniques (ASMR, lighting, camera angle etc.), to influence its viewers' perception of the eating practices presented, as it also mentions "Lighting, angle, shot duration, juxtaposition, cultural context, and a wide array of other elements can actively reinforce or undermine a sequence's meaning." (Cambridge 2014)

With the subject of eating being a common sight in Mukbang content, Mukbang influencers would tend to use other methods of conveying meaning rather than speech, due to its inconvenience under such circumstances. As such, it will be necessary to analyse Mukbang's content based on its aesthetic features, which may serve as a way of influencing viewers' dietary habits.

3.0 Methodology

I will be using the cultivation theory and structuralist film theory to analyse Mukbang videos' content and its viewers' opinions towards the content presented in the analysed videos. I will also be analysing the aesthetic features present in these videos such as lighting, b-roll, placement of food, editing and sound (ASMR). The behaviour and appearance of the Mukbang influencers will also be considered in my analysis of its content. Viewers' comments and reactions to the analysed videos will be included in my analysis to explore their perceptions of the content.

4.0 Discussion and Analysis

4.1 Viewership is garnered through the combination of an absurd, fictitious personality and the presentation of food

A study found that viewers selectively consume Mukbang videos, generally according to the aesthetic features of the food presented or the personality of Mukbang Influencers. (Anjani et al., n.d.) Mukbang Influencers may choose to employ both qualities in their videos to maximise the viewing experience for their audience, thus attracting a greater viewership. This is evident in videos of Nicholas Perry (a.k.a Nikocado Avocado) and Trisha Paytas, and thus I will be analysing how the combination of an absurd, fictitious personality and the presentation of food appeals to Mukbang viewers through the two listed content creators.

4.1.1 Fictitious yet absurd personalities as a means to gain viewership

Nikocado Avocado portrays an intense and erratic persona in many of his recent videos, which has sparked incessant controversy surrounding his mental health. His Mukbang videos involve occasional acts of manic as well as repetitive and over-traumatised dialogue, such as, "this is the last video I'm ever making", "I'm quitting Youtube" or that he is ending off a romantic relationship, which he has used as a title for his videos on nine separate occasions. His sporadic behaviour in his videos may be a case of a mental health crisis, however, any potential personality profile is based on what is seen on Youtube, therefore with the limited knowledge we can obtain from the videos, only an analysis of his potential persona can be made.



Fig 1.1 Perry displays acts of child-like behaviour

Oftentimes, Nikocado Avocado's most viewed videos involve his child-like tantrums and breakdowns. His behaviour is often juxtaposed against the audience expectations of a mature adult, creating incongruity within his videos, which enables him to gain viewership.



Fig 1.2 Perry uses a baby rattle in his introduction

In this video, Perry can be seen using a baby's rattle to announce the purpose of the video, which was to prepare spicy noodles for his birthday. The baby rattle encapsulates his childish persona, while the sudden transition from his normal introduction in which he speaks normally to the audience, to his exaggerated use of the baby rattle highlights his erratic and absurd behaviour. The stark contrast between the bright colour of the baby rattle and the dullness of the background also shows the incongruity of his action in

comparison to what is expected of an adult. Perry may be using this as one of his means to gain viewership, in which he forms humour through the hyperbole of his child-like behaviour and societal expectations of a mature adult. The top comment of this video as seen below serves as a representation of its effect.

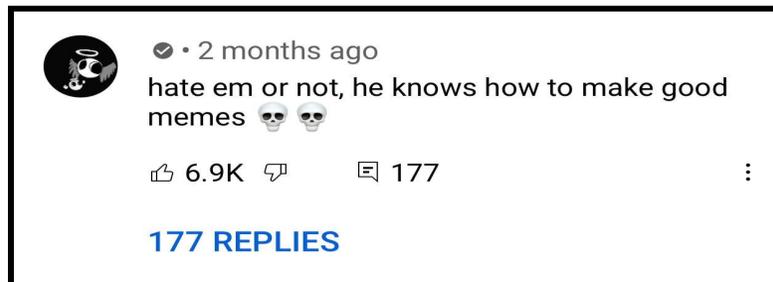


Fig 1.3 Comment on humour presented in Perry’s video

Similar to Nikocado Avocado, Trisha Paytas tends to display an overly emotional and intemperate personality in her videos. Although her behaviours are more suppressed in comparison to Nick’s, her frequent temper tantrums and drama with other content creators also generates occasional controversy surrounding her name.



Fig 1.4 Paytas having a mental breakdown on her kitchen floor

In this video, Paytas can be seen having a mental breakdown on her kitchen floor. She claims to have chosen such an unorthodox setting to film this video because it “has better

lighting”. This suggests that Paytas exhibits histrionic personality characteristics as part of her persona because even as she’s clearly in a state of distress, she wants to ensure her viewers can watch “her whole act”. As I will mention later in this paper, lighting is fundamental to film as it helps the viewers know where to look, as the lighting setup guides the eye to a specific part of a scene, and in this case, Paytas employs the use of lighting to emphasise her distraught persona. Thus, it is clear that both Paytas and Nick appeal to their viewers because of the contrast between their erratic personas and societal expectations for them as adults, which generates humour through incongruity.

4.1.2 Presentation of food to appeal to the masses

Under the structuralist film theory, video content can actively employ the use of filmography techniques rather than speech to convey an underlying message or simply appeal to the audience. With Mukbang’s content mainly focused on the consumption of food, content creators often resort to other approaches to “spice up” their content to appeal to the masses, due to the inconvenience of speech in their line of work. Such methods may include lighting, placement of food, editing and sound (ASMR), all of which I will be analysing to conclude how the presentation of food appeals to the viewers of Mukbang.

Quantity and Quality of food's influence on viewers' appetite



Fig 2.1 Perry preparing to consume an obscene amount of fast food

In Mukbang videos, food is always presented in large quantities, usually occupying half of the screen. This creates a greater emphasis on the food presented in the videos, which captures the viewers' attention, ensuring that they continue the video to maximise viewing time. In Nikocado Avocado's video titled, "McDonald's, KFC, Taco Bell, Burger King, Wendy's Mukbang", he used high camera angles so that all the food on the table can be shown on the screen at the same time and food always took up half of the screen, panning the focus away from him and onto the spread of fast food instead. Viewers' vicarious pleasure demanded a large quantity of unhealthy food be consumed, and most of these viewers watched to see the food not to see Mukbang Influencer's face. (Kagan Kircaburun 2020) Furthermore, studies have shown that people eat more when they are confronted with larger portion sizes. (CDC 2006) This can be furthered by a study conducted by Rolls (2002) that tested how adults responded to meals on different days of four different portion sizes of macaroni and cheese. They found that the bigger the portion, the more participants ate. Participants consumed 30% more energy (162 cal) when offered the largest portion (1000g) compared to the smallest portion (500g). They also reported similar ratings of hunger and fullness after each meal despite the intake differences. Similarly, this shows that the practice of eating large portions of food in Mukbang videos can serve as an incentive for viewers' increase in appetite. This leads to

a heightened desire to eat, causing viewers to suffer from over-eating under the influence of the eating practices portrayed in Mukbang, which can potentially result in obesity and other health risks if viewers decide to adopt such unrealistic eating habits into their lives. Thus, Mukbang's influence can serve as a factor of increased appetites, which may cause viewers to embrace the eating practices portrayed in Mukbang, leading to undesirable health risks.



Fig 2.2 Perry and his husband, Orlin, are about to attempt the fiery noodle challenge

Food shown in Mukbang videos often does not contain vegetables. Instead, a spread of red meat, starchy carbohydrates such as rice and noodles, and bright sauces are usually preferred by Mukbang influencers when producing their videos. In another Nikocado Avocado Mukbang video titled, “Volcano Spicy Battle, Fire Noodle Race Challenge”, only a single large pan of noodles doused in the bright red spicy sauce can be seen presented at the centre of the screen, with the absence of any vegetables besides a small portion of seaweed. This video has amassed around 700 thousand views within two months, highlighting viewers’ preference when it comes to Mukbang content. Furthermore, a study done by Magoulas (2009) has shown that blue and green foods reduce appetite, yellow or orange can stimulate appetite, and red can increase appetite. Therefore, hearty meals such as a pan of instant noodles with spicy sauce as seen above

would greatly increase viewers' appetite as well, incentivising them to continue watching Mukbang content.

Role of ASMR

The appeal of ASMR in food-related videos such as Mukbang has become a trend that many Mukbang influencers have adopted and even based their content on. ASMR, short for “autonomous sensory meridian response”, refers to viewers' pleasant and often unintended feelings from watching certain sensorily “stimulating” videos. (Calla M. Bai 2020) ASMR and Mukbang eating resembles an enhanced eating setting often centred around a theme that is catered towards the audience's tastes. It is therefore not simply about eating, but also about the essence of the food itself and the method through which the content creator consumes what's in front of them. ASMR engages with auditory and visual imagery, to generate a more sensory experience for Mukbang viewers, allowing them to “savour” the food palettes creators present.



Fig 2.3 Zach Choi and Trisha Paytas filming an ASMR video

In a video titled, “ASMR HOT CHEETOS CHICKEN WINGS & STRETCHY CHEESE with TRISHA PAYTAS (No Talking) MUKBANG | Zach Choi”, ASMR was heavily employed through the emphasis on the sound, visuals, and textures of the food presented

in the video. The two dishes that Zach Choi has chosen in this video were fried Chicken Wings with a red crust and a bowl of cheese. Both types of food produce unique sounds that result from their texture, such as the “crunch” of the crust, as well as the “slime-like” stretch of the cheese. This was coupled with their constant chewing noises and the occasional sip of sweetened beverages. The amplified and unique sounds of the food heightens the viewers’ desire for it because this sets a more sensory experience for the viewers, who are illusioned to feel the textures of the food. Thus, this stimulates their desire to experience the idealised perception of the food involved, resulting in a sudden increase in appetite as well.

Their facial expressions also respond to the stimuli of the food, with both influencers maintaining a jovial expression even when they were eating. By encoding the food experience in detail, the sense of pleasure of the food is exaggerated, which stimulates the illusion of the taste of the food and provokes the viewer’s desire for food.

Lighting and Video Editing

Mukbang influencers, especially those involved in ASMR, place a great focus on the lighting in their videos as well as the process of editing. Lighting is fundamental to film because it creates a visual mood, atmosphere, and sense of meaning for the audience. (Lynch 2020) It helps the viewers know where to look, as the lighting setup guides the eye to a specific part of a scene, or in this case, the food. This can be seen in one of Trisha Paytas Mukbang videos, where she uses lighting to produce a brightening effect on the large plate of pasta in front of her. This focuses the viewers’ attention towards the obscene amounts of food and perhaps appeals to those who are trying to pursue the satisfaction of hunger pleasure through visual stimuli. (Donnar, 2017;Pereira et al., 2019; Choi, 2015) But ironically, this would only increase their appetite, rather than satisfy it, because as mentioned before, presenting large portions of food can serve as an incentive for viewers’ increase in appetite. Thus, this heightened desire to eat can eventually lead to overeating and health risks for the viewers.



Fig 3.1 Paytas filming an ASMR video in which she consumes a large plate of pasta

Video editing is also key to ensuring a flawless Mukbang video. To most content creators, video editing is essential because it is the key to blending images and sounds to ensure that viewers feel emotionally connected and sometimes truly there in the video they are watching. (QuickChilli 2020) This allows Mukbang viewers', especially those that are into the genre of ASMR, to engage with a complete sensory experience, and create a more realistic illusion of the Mukbang meal. Thus, this is also a significant contributor to Mukbang's appeal to its audience.

4.2 Romanticisation of Mukbangs trivialises the harms of such eating practices

4.2.1 "Insider" and "outsider" perspectives

In this section, I will be analysing the viewers' comments based on two overarching themes, each consisting of several categories. The first theme, which is the "outsider" perspective, refers to viewers' comments discussing the aspects of Mukbang without any personal involvement, from an objective and external viewpoint. On the other hand, the second theme, which is the "insider" perspective, refers to viewers' comments incorporating descriptions of their own experiences and behaviour in response to

watching these Mukbang videos. Through this research, I can highlight Mukbang’s impact on the dietary habits of its audience, as well as show that under the cultivation theory, frequent viewers of Mukbang are usually more likely to be affected by its content.

The Outsider perspective

Some viewers of Mukbang videos may not be directly affected by its content, but still, choose to express/propound their opinions towards the eating practices portrayed. These comments normally are from occasional viewers of Mukbang, thus their lack of attachment to its content. The following is a table of comments that lean towards a “viewer” perspective, and the categories they may represent. I would be analysing the comments based on their respective categories.

Examples of complete user comments (i.e., comments have not been shortened or otherwise edited) from a viewer perspective
 Video: BLACK BEAN NOODLES WITH HUNGRY FAT CHICK • Mukbang & Recipe (1.4M views)

Category	Examples of User comments
Disgust and Shock	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <p>LiverpoolFCw4333 • 2 months ago This is absolutely grotesque.</p> <p>👍 69 🗨️ 📄 2 ⋮</p> <p>2 REPLIES</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">  <p>Temo Garcia • 3 months ago This is the longest suicide I've ever witnessed</p> <p>👍 6.6K 🗨️ 📄 82 ⋮</p> <p>82 REPLIES</p> </div>

Body Shaming



rubber duckie • 2 months ago

Her biceps are massive. She must spend at least 5 hours in the gym each day.

👍 489



🗨️ 23



[23 REPLIES](#)



James Gibbs • 1 month ago

[5:58](#) Oh my goodness look at those arms. I actually feel sorry for her now

👍 53



🗨️ 5



[5 REPLIES](#)



ShayDior • 2 months ago

I feel skinny watching them... im not skinny

👍 957



🗨️ 17



[17 REPLIES](#)

Viewers who display disgust and shock when commenting about the content of the video, tend to use extreme terms such as “grotesque” and “suicide”, which draws parallels to the extreme eating practices portrayed in the video. “Suicide” is used to denote the impracticality of such forms of eating practices and highlight that it should not be adopted as a lifestyle. This shows that viewers that hold an “outsider” perspective understand the limitations of extreme eating and recognise its health risks.

Body shaming was also a common category of comments found within the video. Viewers tend to comment about the figure of the Mukbang influencer as seen above and display notions of pity and sarcasm. One of the comments states, “Her biceps are massive. She must spend 5 hours in the gym each day.” The clear contrast between the reasons for her abnormality highlights the significance of the physical attributes of the Mukbang influencers, as it shapes the viewers’ perspective on the rationality of adopting such eating practices, which in this case, shows that it is not realistic to adopt such an unhealthy lifestyle, as seen in the obesity suffered by the two Mukbang Influencers. Thus,

the physical attributes of the Mukbang influencer play a significant role in affecting the viewers' perception of Mukbang's unhealthy eating practices.

The Insider perspective

Viewers' who hold "insider" perspectives on Mukbang's content usually feel directly affected by it. They are influenced by the eating practices portrayed in the Mukbang videos, which may change their eating habits as they continue to consume its content. Under the cultivation theory states that the more media that people consume, the more their perceptions change. (Morgan 2010) Thus, these viewers of Mukbang are normally frequent audiences of such content, leading to its influence on their eating habits.

Examples of complete user comments (i.e., comments have not been shortened or otherwise edited) from a viewer perspective

Video:

Nikocado Avocado: BLACK BEAN NOODLES WITH HUNGRY FAT CHICK • Mukbang & Recipe (1.4M views)

Trisha Paytas: 10K Calorie Challenge - Girl VS Food - Epic Cheat Day (6.1M views)

Category	Examples of User Comments
Limits Eating	<div>  Bo Li • 1 month ago Not going to lie I'm craving excess food due to hormones but this video I can watch and my hunger goes away 😂 but for real please take care of your work with you two! 👍 1 🗨️ 📧 ⋮ </div> <div>  TY • 1 month ago I've decided every-time I feel like eating something highly calorific, I'm going to play one of these videos, just to remind myself why I shouldn't. 👍 297 🗨️ 📧 13 ⋮ 13 REPLIES </div>

	<div>  <p>Yaty • 2 years ago I used to watch these when I was anorexic and imagine I was her eating</p> <p>👍 1K 🗨️ 📄 43 ⋮</p> <p>43 REPLIES</p> </div> <div>  <p>Indigo Halz • 2 months ago Watching this makes me not want to eat anymore Thankyou</p> <p>👍 4 🗨️ 📄 ⋮</p> </div>
Increases Eating	<div>  <p>touchdalight ✓ • 4 years ago all these videos do is just make me super hungry idk why i watch them lol</p> <p>👍 7K 🗨️ 📄 62 ⋮</p> <p>62 REPLIES</p> </div> <div>  <p>I'm Anna ok. • 2 years ago Who else is laying in bed hungry and torturing themselves with this video?</p> <p>... Read more</p> <p>👍 3.3K 🗨️ 📄 28 ⋮</p> <p>28 REPLIES</p> </div>
Reduces guilt about own eating	<div>  <p>ShayDior • 2 months ago I feel skinny watching them... im not skinny</p> <p>👍 957 🗨️ 📄 17 ⋮</p> <p>17 REPLIES</p> </div>

From the comments above, it can be seen that the eating practices portrayed in Mukbang can affect viewers' eating habits in multiple ways. Notably, there is often a striking

ambivalence in user comments on Mukbang. The phenomenon is not necessarily seen as helpful or destructive, but instead simultaneously useful and hurtful. For some, it may evoke several types of effects and behavioural impulses at once, such as limiting food intake at the moment while simultaneously reducing shame around eating in general, yet may also lead to an increase in appetite, resulting in instances of overeating, as well as turning a blind eye towards one's unhealthy eating habits.

Specifically, the comment made by Yaty, which states, "I used to watch these when I was anorexic and imagine I was her eating," shows the possible correlation between Mukbang and anorexia nervosa, an eating disorder where people excessively restrict the amount of food they consume, either to prevent weight gain or to continue losing weight, due to their fear of appearing fat. (Smitha Bhandari 2020) Mukbang's content is similar to food blogs or food channels, where food is consumed visually for "content creation" purposes rather than viscerally at the dining table. Food consumption in food blogs and channels has been described as "ingestion without incorporation" (Lavis 2015), generating an elusive confusion of virtual and actual eating. This very quality may contribute to the fascination with food blogs, cookbooks or in this case, Mukbang videos that individuals with anorexia nervosa often display as a way of constantly engaging with food without actually eating it. Thus, Mukbang's content may serve the function of "ingestion without incorporation" for some viewers with disordered eating, which may also worsen their condition.

to4.4 Conclusion

Mukbang has shown to appeal to its audience because of the presentation of food/large amounts of food consumed and through the presence of unusual yet entertaining personalities. Both Perry and Paytas have proven that the employment of an erratic yet fictitious persona generates humour through its incongruity to societal expectations, thus making their content more unique compared to other Mukbang influencers. Despite Mukbang's function as a source of entertainment, it can also serve to negatively influence its viewers' dietary habits. Through an analysis of the insider and outsider perspectives of the viewers, it can be concluded that frequent viewers of Mukbang tend to hold a more "participant" perspective of Mukbang, in which they are more likely to be affected by its content, and in some instances, can exacerbate their eating disorders (e.g. Anorexia Nervosa). Hence, Mukbang can serve as a source of entertainment, yet such romanticisation of its content can also negatively impact its viewers' dietary habits, highlighting the necessity to take precautions against the influence of such content.

Annex A: Citation

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