

Communication Patterns, *Ukhuwah*, and the Digital Environment in Online Gaming Media: A Netnographic Study of the r/Furinamains Community

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Abstract: This study examines the dynamics of communication patterns within the Reddit community r/furinamains, which centers around Furina, a character from the game *Genshin Impact*. The research aims to gain a deeper understanding of how Furina's fans interact within this virtual space. A qualitative netnographic approach was employed as the research method. Data were collected through observation and documentation. The subjects of this study include posts, comments, and discussions that take place within the r/furinamains subreddit. The findings reveal that this interactive space fosters identity formation, digital solidarity, and collective emotional expression within the realm of popular media culture. The discussion considers the ethical context of communication and the values of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) that support the creation of a healthy digital environment.

Keywords: Digital communication, netnography, online gaming, subreddit, media community.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji dinamika pola komunikasi dalam komunitas Reddit r/Furinamains, yang berpusat di sekitar Furina, karakter dari game *Genshin Impact*. Penelitian ini bertujuan memperoleh pemahaman mendalam tentang bagaimana para penggemar Furina berinteraksi dalam ruang virtual. Pendekatan netnografi kualitatif digunakan sebagai metode penelitian. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi dan dokumentasi. Subjek penelitian meliputi postingan, komentar, dan diskusi yang ada di dalam subreddit r/Furinamains. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ruang interaktif ini mendorong pembentukan identitas, solidaritas digital, dan ekspresi emosional kolektif dalam ranah budaya media populer. Diskusi ini juga mempertimbangkan konteks etika komunikasi dan nilai-nilai *ukhuwah*, yang mendukung terciptanya lingkungan digital yang sehat.

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Introduction

Video games are a form of interactive digital entertainment played using computers, consoles (such as Xbox and PlayStation), or mobile devices like smartphones or tablets. Video games are considered a form of competitive activity that takes place in a digital environment. Some computer games do not rely solely on visual display, especially in genres such as text-based adventure games, visual novels, and computer chess. In these types of games, players can provide feedback that can be conveyed and received through speakers or headphones. Current technological developments have fundamentally changed the way humans communicate. The internet has opened new spaces for more interactive and participatory communication (Jenkins, 2006). This phenomenon is known as participatory culture, where audiences are not only consumers of content but also actively engage in the production and dissemination of information (Jenkins et al., 2013).

One of the most popular video games in recent years is *Genshin Impact*. *Genshin Impact* is a widely recognized game originating from China and is an action role-playing game developed and published by MiHoYo. Accessible to a broad audience, the widespread popularity of *Genshin Impact* has given rise to a large fan community. A fan community is a group of individuals united by a common topic or shared area of interest. *Genshin Impact* ranks fourth in player interaction in Indonesia. The game's popularity is further evidenced by its impressive download statistics, with 6,857,493 downloads on the App Store and Google Play Store. According to a publication by Willy (2022), *Genshin Impact* is the most downloaded RPG game in Indonesia. As a result of this popularity, *Genshin Impact* has built a dedicated community around the game. A notable aspect of this community is the enthusiasm shown toward the individual characters within the *Genshin Impact* character roster. These character-focused communities frequently use Reddit as a primary platform for communication, often referred to as *Genshin* main subreddits.

Reddit is a forum-based discussion site composed of various subreddits—sub-communities built around specific interests (Papacharissi, 2015). In this context, subreddits function as discussion

spaces where users share information, engage in dialogue, and form collective identities based on shared interests (Baym, 2015). Reddit also exemplifies a platform that emphasizes algorithm-driven communication, where the popularity of content is determined by a system of upvotes and downvotes given by other users (Gillespie, 2018).

The Genshin main subreddits are divided into several subreddits, with each character having a dedicated subreddit consisting of fans who favor that character. Each Genshin main subreddit has its own unique culture and interaction style, which may vary or resemble those of other *Genshin* main subreddits. Among these character-based communities, one in particular has drawn the attention of the researcher—the subreddit community of the character Furina, known as r/furinamains.

Furina, also referred to as Focalors, plays a significant role in the latest storyline of Genshin Impact. Her enigmatic and dramatic character traits make her one of the most mysterious figures in the game. As a result, the community frequently engages in theories about Furina's character. In addition, members share a wide range of posts about Furina, including memes and jokes centered around her. These discussions give rise to unique and recognizable interactions within the Furina community.

The subreddit r/furinamains is a digital community that thrives within the ecosystem of participatory media. Community members not only share gameplay strategies and character analysis, but also create narrative interpretations, share creative content such as fan art and memes, and discuss various aspects of the game (Gee, 2005). This aligns with the concept of affective publics, where digital communities connect not only through rational discussion but also through shared emotions and interests (Papacharissi, 2015).

As a participatory community, r/furinamains demonstrates how internet users can construct collective discourse within digital environments. The discussions in this subreddit reflect how online communities function—where interactions are not only informative but also generate broader social value (boyd, 2014). Members of the

community have the freedom to express their opinions, yet are simultaneously expected to follow the rules established by moderators and other members (Van Dijck, 2013). For this reason, the researcher is interested in examining symbolic interactions within the Furina character subreddit, r/furinamains. Symbolic interaction can significantly impact the formation of digital relationships and communication patterns among individuals, especially within communities such as r/furinamains.

Literature Review

Online Game Media and User Participation

Online game media has experienced rapid development over the past few decades and has become one of the main forms of digital culture, creating spaces for social interaction among users. Online games provide a more dynamic gameplay experience by connecting players from various parts of the world within a complex digital ecosystem. These games are not only entertainment media but also serve as social arenas where users can interact, build virtual communities, and share experiences and information (Jenkins, 2006).

Virtual communities, or cyber communities, are groups that interact exclusively through the internet. Reingold defines the internet as a platform that allows users to engage in virtual interaction and take part in intense discussions about their views and emotions. Online interaction has a greater impact on the development of virtual communities compared to offline interaction. This can be seen in the fan community of Furina, a character in the game Genshin Impact, who interact with each other on the Reddit platform. These communities typically include individuals from a wide range of age groups, including both children and adults.

In the Furina fan community on Reddit, or r/furinamains, user participation is not only consumptive but also productive. Players actively contribute by creating theories about the character Furina, discussing gameplay strategies, and

sharing creative content to enhance the gaming experience. Ito et al. (2010), state that digital communities like this provide a space for players to negotiate their identity in the virtual world, strengthen social relationships, and increase engagement with the game. Such communities function not only as forums for discussion but also as forms of social support for their members, where players can share experiences, give advice, and even build relationships that go beyond the game itself.

Furthermore, user participation in online games can be analyzed from the perspective of gameplay motivation. Barthes (1972), classifies players into four main categories based on their patterns of interaction in the game world: achievers – players who seek achievements in the game, such as leveling up characters, collecting rare items, or completing specific challenges; explorers – players who enjoy exploring the game world, finding hidden elements, and understanding the game's mechanics; socializers – players who are more interested in the social aspects of the game, building relationships with others, and participating in the game community; killers – players who enjoy competition and dominating others, whether through PvP (player versus player) combat or other gameplay strategies.

In the r/furinamains community, the socializer and achiever types tend to be more dominant. Socializers use the forum to interact, share gameplay experiences, and discuss theories and dynamics in the game. Meanwhile, achievers contribute to the community by sharing effective strategies, discussing character optimization, and exploring game mechanics in depth. The combination of these two types of players creates a dynamic ecosystem in which the social and mechanical aspects of the game coexist and complement one another.

Patterns of Communication and Interaction in Digital Space

Communication in digital spaces offers flexibility for users. They can interact with other members both asynchronously and synchronously. Asynchronous communication refers to interactions that do not require immediate responses, such as in Reddit discussion forums, where users can read and reply to messages at their

convenience. This form of communication often results in more in-depth and structured discussions because it allows users to think before responding (Walther, 2011). On the other hand, synchronous communication occurs in real-time, such as in live chats on platforms like Discord, Twitch, or in-game chat features available in various online games (DeAndrea et al., 2012). These interactions resemble face-to-face conversations, enabling quick responses and more dynamic discussions. In online gaming communities, synchronous communication is crucial for coordinating game strategies, sharing immediate reactions, or simply building camaraderie among community members (Keating & Sunakawa, 2010).

In online game communities such as *r/furinamains*, the use of images, gameplay video clips, and text in various formats are the main tools for expressing opinions about game strategies, character analysis, or simply sharing humor that only fellow community members can understand. Additionally, the trend of using avatars and digital identities has further strengthened social interactions within online communities. Players often construct their personas based on in-game characters, which then influence how they communicate and interact with other community members (Boellstorff, 2015). These digital identities not only serve as a means of self-expression but also create unique social dynamics within virtual communities.

However, communication in digital spaces does not occur without rules. Every online community has norms and social control mechanisms intended to maintain the quality of interactions and prevent undesirable behavior. Community moderation on platforms such as Reddit applies an upvote/downvote system that allows users to determine the visibility of content based on its relevance and quality (Van Dijck, 2013). This system serves as a form of social control, ensuring that discussions that surface are those deemed valuable by the majority of community members. Beyond technical mechanisms, communication norms in online communities also develop organically through the social practices of the community's members (Herring, 2019). Sproull (1991), explain that online communication is often influenced by the phenomenon of deindividuation, where anonymity

can make users feel more free to express their opinions. However, in communities with strict moderation systems, social norms can still be maintained, ensuring that interactions proceed in a healthy and constructive manner.

Communication in digital communities also plays a role in forming close-knit social networks among members. Rheingold (2000), in his concept of virtual communities, explains that active participation in digital communities enables individuals to build strong social identities within them. In communities such as r/furinamains, interactions among members are not limited to discussions on one platform but also extend to others such as Discord, Twitter, and TikTok. This continuity of interaction demonstrates that digital communities function not only as spaces for sharing information but also as social arenas where deeper interpersonal relationships are formed (Wellman & Gulia, 1999). Community members often form friendships, collaborate on content creation, or even offer emotional support to one another, creating a more complex social ecosystem within the digital world.

One unique aspect of communication in online game communities is the use of specific community jargon. In daily interactions, terms such as meta (strategies or characters considered most effective in the game), buff (a character's power increase), nerf (a character's power reduction), or gacha (a game's lottery mechanic) become part of the vocabulary understood by players (Gee, 2004). The use of this language not only facilitates communication among community members but also reflects how communities build their own communication norms and identities. These jargon terms evolve along with changes in game mechanics, game updates, and emerging trends within the player community. The shared use of these terms fosters a sense of belonging among community members, as only those who understand the context can fully participate in discussions.

From the various aspects of digital communication discussed, it can be concluded that communication in digital spaces does not merely function as a tool for exchanging information but also plays a broader role in shaping community identity, creating strong social networks,

and establishing unique norms of interaction. In online game communities such as *r/furinamains*, communication is not solely for gameplay purposes but has become an integral part of members' social lives. Through a combination of text-based and visual communication, moderation systems, and the use of distinctive language, digital communities continue to develop into increasingly complex and dynamic interaction spaces.

Social Values in Community Communication: Brotherhood, Etiquette, and Social Control in Digital Spaces

In an increasingly digital era, online communities have become an integral part of human social life. Interactions within digital communities, including online gaming communities, are not only functional as a means of entertainment but also carry broader social dimensions. From the perspective of Islamic communication, digital communities can serve as platforms for spreading positive social values, including *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), *adab* (communication etiquette), and social control (Nasrullah, 2023).

The concept of *ukhuwah* in Islam emphasizes the importance of solidarity, togetherness, and mutual support within a community (Al-Qardawi, 2006). As stated in Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat verse 10:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوِيكُمْ ؕ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

“The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy.” Islamic teachings also encourage collaborative support within society, urging believers to help one another in goodness and piety. As in Qur'an Surah Ali-Imran verse 104: “Let there be among you a group of people who call to goodness, enjoin what is right, and forbid what is wrong. They are the ones who will be successful.”

In the context of the *r/furinamains* community, the Islamic perspective on community interaction aligns with principles of collaboration, mutual support, and respect. Users who participate in discussions, offer advice, and share knowledge exemplify the Islamic value of helping one another. For instance, when users collaborate to

improve gameplay strategies, optimize characters, or appreciate fan art, these activities reflect the Islamic ideals of collective support and unity. In online gaming communities, members often build relationships that go beyond casual playmates. They may become discussion partners, share personal experiences, and even form lasting friendships outside the virtual world. In communities like *r/furinamains*, players who share a fondness for a particular character often exchange analyses, story theories, and gameplay experiences that strengthen their sense of camaraderie. This shows that *ukhuwah* is not limited to physical connections, but can also grow through meaningful digital interactions.

In digital environments, where individuals often interact anonymously, maintaining *adab* (etiquette) in communication becomes increasingly challenging. When a person does not feel bound by their physical identity, there is a tendency to speak more freely, which in some cases may lead to disrespectful or even aggressive behavior. Therefore, proper communication norms must be upheld to ensure the community remains a comfortable and inclusive space for all members.

In addition to *ukhuwah*, *adab* in communication is essential for maintaining balance and harmony in digital communities. This includes using respectful language, acknowledging differing opinions, and practicing ethical discourse. Islamic teachings emphasize interpersonal relationships founded on compassion, respect, and mutual understanding. As stated in Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat verse 11:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرُ قَوْمٌ مِّنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّنْ نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَرُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الْأَسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

“O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them. Nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another or call each other by offensive

nicknames. How evil it is to use a name for wickedness after one has believed. And whoever does not repent – then it is those who are the wrongdoers.”

This verse highlights the importance of avoiding ridicule and judgment, and of fostering an environment of mutual respect and understanding. In *r/furinamains*, symbolic interaction is evident in the respectful exchange of ideas and discussions among users. Examples include constructive dialogue, diverse viewpoints, and mutual appreciation, all of which align with Islamic principles of positive, respectful community interaction. In online gaming, communication ethics also apply to how individuals respond to both victories and defeats. A player with good *adab* will remain sportsmanlike, avoid belittling opponents, and refrain from using offensive language. These ethics are equally relevant in community discussions on gameplay strategies or updates. When disagreements arise, it is crucial for members to respect each other's perspectives and avoid unproductive arguments.

Beyond *ukhuwah* and *adab*, social control in digital communities plays a vital role in maintaining the quality of interactions. In Islam, the concept of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* forms the foundation of social control—encouraging good and preventing wrongdoing in social interactions (Al-Qaradawi, 2006). In digital communities, social control can take the form of community rules, moderation systems, and user interventions in upholding norms.

On platforms like Reddit, moderation by users and community admins serves as a mechanism of social control to maintain interaction quality. The *r/furinamains* subreddit has several community rules that shape discussions, such as: Be respectful and polite, Stay relevant to Focalors/Furina, No NSFW content, Mark story-related spoilers, No low-effort posts, Cite sources when possible, and Crossposting content is allowed. Fundamentally, *r/furinamains* serves as a hub for focused discussions on the mysterious character Furina, while also functioning as a carefully moderated environment where respect, relevance, and high-quality conversations coexist harmoniously.

Users can also upvote or downvote posts or comments, which ultimately affects the visibility of content within the community. This creates a participatory form of social control, where members actively shape the kinds of content considered relevant and valuable. Through this system, digital communities can regulate the flow of information and ensure that ongoing discussions remain within agreed norms. When studying *r/furinamains* more closely, it is important to recognize the moderators who act as the guardians and caretakers of this growing community. Identified by the tag "Staff Salon de Furina," they hold key responsibilities in upholding the integrity of the subreddit. Each moderator brings their own perspective and commitment, ensuring that discussions align with community standards.

Social control also plays a role in curbing the spread of hoaxes and misinformation. Many digital communities implement reporting systems that allow users to flag misleading or rule-breaking content. In Islam, spreading false information is strictly prohibited, as it can lead to *fitnah* (discord) and negatively affect society. Therefore, users in digital communities must be more cautious when consuming and sharing information, always striving to verify facts before distributing content that could lead to misunderstanding.

This study employs a qualitative approach using netnography as its primary research method. Netnography is an empirical research methodology focused on the examination and analysis of online phenomena and subjects. It adapts traditional ethnographic methods to study online communities (Kozinets, 2010). Netnography enables researchers to explore social and cultural practices within digital community interactions, including how members share information, construct identities, and uphold shared values and norms. This method allows for flexible observation without the need for direct intervention and

Methodology

enables the collection of large volumes of data rich in contextual detail. One of netnography's key strengths is its ability to capture data naturally, based on authentic interactions among community members without being influenced by the researcher's presence (Kozinets, 2010).

In this research, the subjects consist of posts, comments, and discussions occurring within the *r/furinamains* subreddit. These subjects were selected through random sampling based on specific criteria relevant to the subreddit under study. The sampling criteria included posts and comments made within *r/furinamains*. Primary data were collected through active observation aimed at addressing the process of symbolic interaction and communication patterns within the subreddit. Secondary data included additional indicators such as the reception of posts or comments (as measured by upvotes and downvotes), levels of engagement, and both written and unwritten community rules within *r/furinamains*.

The data collected were analyzed using thematic analysis Braun & Clarke (2006), to identify major patterns in community communication. Data collection was carried out through passive participant observation and content documentation within the *r/furinamains* subreddit. Observation was conducted without active participation by the researcher to maintain objectivity in analyzing communication patterns. The researcher monitored community activity over a set research period to understand how users interact, express opinions, and respond to uploaded content. Communication patterns were further analyzed based on the most popular types of posts, conversation structures, and the level of user engagement in discussions. The study also examined community rules that guide discussions in *r/furinamains*, including how moderation is handled by administrators and how social norms are upheld by community members. Throughout the observation, significant discussions were documented to examine how dominant discourses evolved within the community.

Content documentation was used to archive data from the *r/furinamains* subreddit. This included collecting posts and comments relevant to the research topic, analyzing interaction levels based on

upvotes, downvotes, and other forms of engagement, and categorizing data based on content type—such as gameplay strategy discussions, developer critiques, lore theories, and community humor or memes. The researcher also noted the dynamic shifts in discussions over time to track the evolution of discourse within the community. Through the application of netnographic methods, systematic data collection techniques, and in-depth thematic analysis, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of communication patterns and social interaction within the *r/furinamains* community.

Digital Symbols and Community Language

Online communities are shaped by reciprocal exchanges, often revolving around the content shared within the group. The subreddit *r/furinamains* exhibits a distinctive communication pattern through its use of digital symbols and community-specific language, which contributes to the collective identity of its members. Among the most popular types of posts are those centered on humor and memes—where wit, sarcasm, and cleverness converge in the form of jokes and playful exchanges. Community members actively engage in light-hearted comedic interactions, often teasing one another in a way that creates a vibrant and entertaining environment. This dynamic is clearly evident in *r/furinamains*.

Members contribute humor based on symbolic meanings they associate with Genshin Impact, the community itself, or other sources. These acts of symbolic expression serve as both markers of membership and reflections of shared understanding regarding the character Furina and the Genshin Impact universe. As Blommaert (2010) argues, the use of symbols in digital communication facilitates more effective expression of ideas and emotions, thereby building connections and strengthening solidarity

Findings and Discussion

among members. Shifman (2014) notes that memes also serve as gatekeeping tools, distinguishing those who possess insider knowledge from newcomers. Most memes shared on the subreddit take the form of inside jokes, comprehensible only to long-time followers of Furina’s development and community discussions.

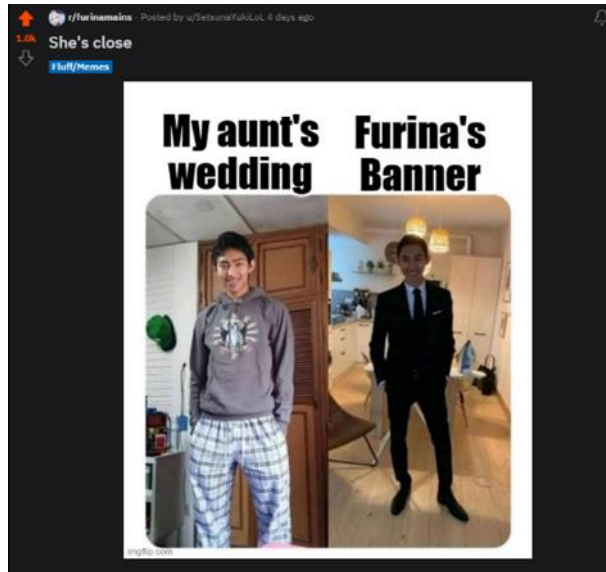


Figure 1. Meme posted by user SetsunaYukiLoL

An example of this is a humorous meme posted by user SetsunaYukiLoL, which features two juxtaposed images: one of a man dressed casually for his aunt’s wedding, and another of the same man wearing a full suit in anticipation of Furina’s upcoming banner in Genshin Impact. The post, titled "She's almost here," humorously highlights the hype surrounding the character’s release. User maxwell404 jokingly replied that attending his aunt’s wedding was less important than witnessing “the glory of our Queen,” referring to Furina. Another user, BracusDoritoBoss963, supported this notion by sharing an NSFW-sourced image of Furina saying, “Say your piece. That’s a fact, my friend!”—a symbolic affirmation of maxwell404’s

comment. User storysprite responded with the slang term “based,” signaling agreement.

The symbolic interaction in maxwell404’s comment positions Furina as the most important and revered figure in the community. The phrase “the glory of our Queen” operates as a symbolic representation of Furina, elevating her status among fans. From a symbolic interactionist perspective, symbols like Furina gain meaning through social interaction. Labeling her “the Queen” demonstrates how users ascribe roles and symbolic value to characters, shaping a shared identity and value system within the gaming community.

This interaction also illustrates the light-hearted and exaggerated communication style prevalent in gaming communities, where users often employ hyperbole and humor to express their sentiments. Such communication fosters friendship, amusement, and mutual engagement among members. Barton & Lee (2013), explain that online communities often develop their own “sociolects”—distinctive forms of language used to ease communication and interaction within the group. These unique expressions usually make sense only to insiders and become part of the community’s identity.

In addition to memes, members of r/furinamains express their creativity through fan art. These artworks typically depict Furina in a variety of visual interpretations, ranging from realistic to caricature or chibi styles. Fan art functions not only as an appreciation of the character but also as a means to share alternative interpretations of Furina not present in the game. According to Lamerichs (2018), in fan cultures, fan art is a mode of expressing affection for a particular character. It is also an example of “textual poaching” (Fiske, 1992), wherein fans reinterpret the original material based on their personal perspectives. Art holds a special place in r/furinamains. Members unleash their creativity by producing and exchanging a wide array of artistic creations—illustrations, edits, and fan compositions—all centered on their beloved character, Furina. These artworks act as canvases for the community’s imagination, representing emotional responses and unique interpretations inspired by the game and its lore.



Figure 2. Fan art post by maxwell404 (Researcher)

One such post by maxwell404 shares an adorable image of Furina with a cute, pouting expression. The caption asks, “What do you think made Furina pout like this?” (art by: @ohota_ye1). The community quickly responded with humorous interpretations. User SarukyDraico commented, “She realized we ate her cake,” which was followed by maxwell404’s playful reply, “We’re going to jail.” To outsiders, these comments may appear nonsensical—how could one eat a digital character’s cake? However, within the community, the joke makes perfect sense: it refers to Furina’s in-game fondness for cake, and the idea of eating it without permission is humorously framed as an offense. Maxwell404’s exaggerated response adds a comical layer through hyperbole, a common comedic technique in online interactions. These symbolic expressions contribute to the community’s humorous atmosphere and highlight shared cultural knowledge.

The Subreddit as a Space for Participatory Interaction

Online communities such as r/furinamains serve not only as platforms for information sharing and discussion but also as participatory arenas where members actively co-construct the community discourse. The comment feature in subreddits plays a central role in fostering deeper social interactions. Through comments, users can respond to posts, share perspectives, or simply engage in humorous banter. These interactions often evolve into extended discussions encompassing multiple viewpoints, illustrating how meaning is collaboratively constructed within digital spaces.

As discussed earlier, user maxwell404 posted a fan art image that sparked a playful comment thread. User TotallyNotShinobi joined the fun with “Behavior without cake,” to which maxwell404 replied, “Paimon ate it all.” Storysprite contributed, “I love how so many of us came to the same conclusion,” and TotallyNotShinobi agreed, “It’s pretty obvious, given how little we know about her right now.”

Storysprite’s comment highlights a shared interpretation among community members, signaling a collective understanding based on limited available information. This reflects the community’s capacity for collective imagination, as users humorously speculate about character traits in the absence of official details. TotallyNotShinobi’s agreement further reinforces this idea, showing how the community engages in collaborative world-building even through absurd or humorous interpretations.

Each comment acts as a symbol of familiarity and creativity, with Furina’s expressions serving as focal points for communal speculation. The overall interaction illustrates the community’s ability to bond, speculate, and find amusement in the subtle nuances of character design. One-way communication is represented by maxwell404’s initial post, which invited humorous responses from others without immediate dialogue. Two-way interaction is evident in the exchange between SarukyDraico and maxwell404, where a joke about stolen cake leads to an exaggerated consequence. Multi-directional interaction emerges as other users like TotallyNotShinobi and storysprite contribute their perspectives, enriching the conversation and

reinforcing shared humor. These examples illustrate the varying levels of participation in the *r/furinamains* community.

Beyond comments, the subreddit's voting system plays a crucial role in shaping the community's dominant discourse. Through upvotes and downvotes, members assess the relevance and quality of content. Posts with more upvotes gain prominence and are more likely to become focal points of discussion, while those with more downvotes are pushed into obscurity. Graham & Rodriguez (2021) assert that such voting mechanisms enable collective curation, allowing community preferences to determine which content is deemed valuable. However, they also caution that these practices can be influenced by bias and evolving social norms within the group.

Solidarity, Ethics, and Virtual Social Dynamics in Community Communication

The content shared by members of the *r/furinamains* community is not solely intended for entertainment. Posts submitted by members often spark discussions that open up broader avenues of interaction. In this way, *r/furinamains* can be seen as a social space that fosters solidarity among its members (Rheingold, 2000). Solidarity in this community is built through various interactions that reinforce a sense of belonging toward both the group and the character they idolize. Members frequently show support for one another, whether through appreciation for shared artwork, assistance in understanding gameplay strategies, or defending each other against external criticism. In the concept of *affective publics* presented by Papacharissi (2015), digital communities can form emotional bonds through collective expressions, thereby strengthening solidarity among their members.

The multi-directional communication patterns on *r/furinamains* showcase interactions within a group setting where numerous individuals actively engage in discussions, exchange ideas, and collectively contribute to ongoing conversations. This pattern encourages broader participation, cultivating a collaborative environment where diverse perspectives, experiences, and knowledge are shared to enrich the discourse.

One manifestation of solidarity is through discussions that exchange insights, theories, and analyses—all closely tied to the enigmatic character Furina. These discussions serve as forums for members to explore and dissect gaming knowledge, character development, and broader thematic elements, fostering an environment supportive of intellectual exchange and discovery. An example can be seen in the image below:

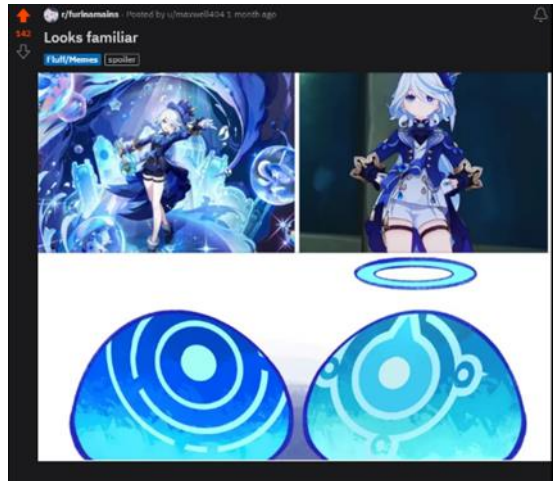


Figure 3. User maxwell404 (Researcher) shared image

User maxwell404 shared an intriguing image featuring the character Furina from *Genshin Impact* dressed in two different outfits—one in bright blue and the other in dark blue. The post was titled "Looks Familiar," as Furina's outfit resembled that of a slime monster in the game. This post prompted a lively discussion within the r/furinamains community. In the first reply, user brownbear-y shared an imaginative concept, suggesting that Furina's ultimate ability could involve switching between the two outfits to provide healing for the team. They speculated about a theme of duality symbolized by a changing necklace, with a second persona appearing during the ultimate and vanishing during cooldown. This idea received several responses. MeetingPatient1502 echoed the sentiment, stating, "That's

exactly what I thought when I saw the design and her kit.” GingsWife expressed concern about the practicality of such a concept within Furina’s actual in-game abilities, considering potential conflicts. DamnGumi3 stated a preference for Furina’s original design in the overworld, disliking the darker outfit and the absence of her twintails. RandomArtisticBitch hoped for an alternate skin that would feature Furina’s original form if the concept wasn’t realized in-game.

In Islamic teachings, community interaction holds great significance, emphasizing principles of unity, mutual support, and cooperation among individuals. The Qur’an and Hadith, as the core of Islamic guidance, encourage positive community engagement, highlighting values that foster harmonious relationships, empathy, and collaborative support. The concept of *ummah*, representing a united community, underscores the interconnectedness of individuals in Islam. It emphasizes solidarity, compassion, and shared responsibility toward one another. As stated in Qur’an, Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 10:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

“The believers are but brothers, so make peace between your brothers and fear Allah that you may receive mercy.”

In the context of the r/furinamains community, the Islamic perspective on community interaction aligns with the principles of collaboration, support, and mutual respect. Users engaged in discussion, providing advice, and sharing knowledge exemplify the Islamic values of helping one another. For instance, when users collaborate to improve game strategies, optimize character builds, or appreciate fan art, they reflect the Islamic ideals of collective support and unity. Moreover, the Islamic view on community also stresses the importance of respectful and courteous interaction. Discussions that foster empathy, understand diverse viewpoints, and maintain decorum resonate with Islamic teachings that prioritize kindness and consideration in social engagement.

Beyond solidarity, this community also cultivates an ethical system that evolves organically through norms established in daily

interactions. The community's ethics are largely shaped by rules enforced by subreddit moderators, which prohibit hate speech, spam, and provocative or offensive content. In addition to moderator-enforced rules, the community employs social sanction mechanisms to uphold its standards. One common form of social sanction is the downvote system, which allows members to decrease the visibility of comments or posts deemed misaligned with community values. The upvote and downvote systems on Reddit are not only tools for evaluating content quality but also serve as ways for the community to enforce its social norms.

However, this system is not without its flaws. In certain cases, voting mechanisms can reflect majority biases, where dissenting or controversial opinions tend to receive downvotes, thereby discouraging diverse perspectives. According to Matias (2019), mod-driven moderation in online communities often functions as a tool to maintain group consensus, which can lead to groupthink effects and hinder broader discussion.

While the subreddit is structurally managed by moderators responsible for enforcing rules and filtering content, leadership within the community can also emerge informally from influential members. Some users who frequently post compelling theories, create high-quality content such as fan art and viral memes, or offer in-depth game guides often attain elevated status within the community. Putnam's (2000) concept of social capital explains that individuals who actively participate in digital communities can build reputation and influence within their groups. The presence of such individuals illustrates how leadership in virtual communities does not always rely on formal positions but rather on contributions and the impact they bring to the community. Additionally, the social dynamics of this community are shaped by natural mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion.

Conclusion

This study shows that digital communities, particularly those on gaming media platforms like the subreddit r/furinamains, develop distinctive communication patterns through memes and fan art. These

communication forms function not only as a means of information exchange but also play a crucial role in shaping community identity and strengthening social solidarity among members. Memes serve as dominant tools of expression, acting not only as internal humor but also as a medium for social critique—especially regarding game mechanisms like the gacha system. Moreover, fan art acts as a form of creative expression reflecting the collective understanding of Furina's character and the world of *Genshin Impact*, deepening the emotional attachment among community members.

From the perspective of Islamic communication, this digital community can serve as a platform for promoting positive social values such as *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), *adab* (communication ethics), and social control. The principle of *ukhuwah* is evident in the social support shared among members, whether through exchanging game strategies or as a space for self-expression. *Adab* in community communication is reflected in the moderation rules that regulate member interactions to remain ethical and conducive. Meanwhile, social control in this community appears in the form of the reporting system, which helps maintain a digital environment free from hoaxes and misinformation.

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