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Music as Environmental Advocacy: Constructing and Interpreting Environmental Discourse on Efek Rumah Kaca's YouTube Channel

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ABSTRACT

Music provides a cultural medium through which environmental concerns can be articulated beyond conventional informational and advocacy-based communication. This study examines how Efek Rumah Kaca (ERK) constructs environmental discourse through music and how audiences interpret these meanings within the digital context of YouTube. Employing a netnographic approach, the study analyzes three music videos published on ERK's YouTube channel, @efekrumahkacaofficial: *"Efek Rumah Kaca," "Hujan Jangan Marah,"* and *"Merdeka,"* alongside 46 audience comments. The findings reveal that ERK articulates environmental discourse through interconnected ecological, social, and political narratives. *"Efek Rumah Kaca"* addresses global warming and the greenhouse effect, while *"Hujan Jangan Marah"* evokes environmental degradation and ecological vulnerability. Meanwhile, *"Merdeka"* connects environmental concerns with natural resource ownership, community resistance, and social justice. Audience comments further illustrate how these meanings are interpreted and extended through concerns about resource ownership, environmental inequality, and the commodification of nature. By examining musical and audiovisual representations alongside audience interpretations, this study highlights how music functions as a medium of environmental advocacy and how YouTube provides a digital context in which environmental discourse is communicated and interpreted. The study contributes to environmental communication and media studies by examining both the construction of environmental meanings through music and their interpretation by audiences.

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INTRODUCTION

Environmental communication has become an increasingly important area of media and communication research as environmental issues, climate change, and sustainability gain prominence in public and political discourse. Media play a central role in mediating environmental information by connecting scientific knowledge, political processes, and public understanding. Through news coverage, digital content, and other forms of mediated communication, environmental issues become accessible and meaningful to audiences. However, media do not simply transmit environmental information; they also shape how environmental problems are represented, interpreted, and debated. By selecting and

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framing particular issues, media contribute to the construction of environmental discourse and influence public perceptions of environmental challenges and possible responses (Boykoff, 2009).

Previous studies have examined how media shape environmental discourse and public accountability across different political and media contexts. In the United States, media coverage provides a discursive arena in which corporate environmental legitimacy is negotiated, with negative coverage generating pressure on corporations to improve environmental disclosures and respond to public scrutiny (Rupley et al., 2012). Similarly, in China, social media platforms such as Weibo have provided spaces for environmental discussion and collective mobilization despite constraints imposed by surveillance and censorship. Environmental non-governmental organizations, including Greenpeace China, have used these platforms to frame environmental concerns and engage audiences, illustrating how media can facilitate environmental advocacy and public mobilization within distinct political and institutional contexts (Ji et al., 2018).

The role of social media in environmental communication also extends beyond information dissemination to shaping social influence and collective participation. Han and Xu (2020) suggest that efforts to encourage pro-environmental behavior may be strengthened when communication strategies activate interpersonal discussions and word-of-mouth sharing through social media. By encouraging individuals to share their environmental actions within peer and family networks, platforms such as WeChat and Weibo can facilitate demonstration effects, reinforce perceptions of collective environmental risk, and potentially encourage wider participation. Similarly, media coverage of corporate environmental initiatives can raise public awareness while increasing the visibility of sustainability efforts. In this regard, media operate both as watchdogs that reinforce accountability and as channels through which corporate environmental initiatives are communicated to public, governmental, and investor audiences (Wu et al., 2022).

Research in other contexts further demonstrates that media representations can transform the meaning and public framing of environmental issues. In Spain, Castrechini et al. (2014) found that environmental coverage changed over fifteen years, with issues increasingly represented not merely as natural or scientific problems but as urban and political concerns open to public debate and social reflection. In Southeast Asia, media coverage of transboundary haze pollution has similarly evolved. Initial reporting emphasized the health and economic consequences of forest fires, while later coverage became more critical and politically nuanced. In Singapore and Malaysia, media outlets have often conveyed criticism indirectly through academics, non-governmental organizations, and readers, reflecting the constraints of journalistic practice. These representations have contributed to public demands for accountability involving the Indonesian government, neighboring countries, private corporations, and regional institutions such as ASEAN (Forsyth, 2014).

Environmental communication research in Southeast Asia highlights the role of media in shaping environmental knowledge, public awareness, and civic engagement, while also revealing persistent challenges. In Singapore, traditional media have been associated with environmental literacy, whereas internet-based communication provides greater opportunities for civic participation. However, media coverage may fail to connect specific environmental events, such as haze episodes, with broader climate change processes (Ho & Chuah, 2017). In Malaysia, environmental communication faces challenges including limited dedicated environmental coverage and the need to move beyond information dissemination toward environmental education and public engagement (Saleh & Saifudin, 2017). Studies further indicate that social media, particularly Facebook, serves as an important channel for disseminating environmental information and raising awareness, with communication effectiveness influenced by platform and information quality (Mahat et al., 2023).

Taken together, these studies demonstrate that environmental communication is shaped by political and institutional contexts, media representations, and the communicative affordances of traditional and digital platforms. Previous research has primarily examined

environmental advocacy through news media, social media campaigns, environmental non-governmental organizations, and corporate communication. Although music has also been recognized as a medium for environmental communication and advocacy, less attention has been paid to how environmental discourse is constructed through musical and audiovisual expression and how these meanings are subsequently interpreted by audiences in digital media environments. This distinction is important because environmental meanings communicated through music do not necessarily remain confined to the intentions or representations of artists. When musical works circulate on digital platforms, audiences may interpret these meanings in relation to their own social, political, and ecological concerns. Examining music alongside audience comments therefore offers an opportunity to understand environmental communication as both a process of discourse construction and a process of audience interpretation.

Furthermore, music offers a distinctive communicative form through which environmental issues can be articulated, represented, and interpreted. Unlike conventional informational campaigns, songs combine lyrics, sound, performance, and symbolic expression to communicate environmental concerns through cultural and emotional resonance. Wodak (2018) argues that popular music provides distinctive ways of engaging with environmental themes and conveying experiences of ecological change through culturally situated musical forms. Prior (2022) similarly discusses music's potential to engage emotions, beliefs, and environmental orientations, suggesting that it can shape how people relate to climate change and environmental action. More recent research on music-based climate communication highlights how musical composition and narrative can translate scientific information into emotionally accessible experiences for audiences (Dixon et al., 2024). These perspectives position music not merely as an artistic product but as a communicative practice through which environmental discourse is constructed, represented, and circulated.

The relationship between music and environmental communication is also evident in its role in activism and cultural expression. Pieri (2025), for example, examines how music functions within Extinction Rebellion as a framing mechanism for articulating environmental grievances, proposed solutions, and calls for action, while also reinforcing solidarity and collective identity. Collinson and Keogh (2024) further show how popular music and musicians' environmental engagement can support activism by combining artistic expression with environmental advocacy. Such research demonstrates music's capacity to function as a cultural resource for communicating environmental concerns and mobilizing environmental advocacy. However, environmental meanings conveyed through music are not necessarily fixed by artists' intentions or representations. They may be interpreted in different ways depending on the social, cultural, and digital contexts in which musical works are encountered. This is particularly relevant when music circulates on platforms such as YouTube, where audiences can respond to and interpret environmental themes through their own experiences and concerns.

In Indonesia, the independent band Efek Rumah Kaca provides a relevant case for investigating this relationship, given its sustained engagement with social and ecological issues in its musical repertoire. The band's presence on YouTube also offers an important context for examining how environmental discourse is communicated through audiovisual content and how audiences interpret and negotiate its meanings through platform-based interaction. YouTube comments are particularly relevant because they provide a space where audiences can respond to, affirm, contest, or reinterpret messages conveyed through media content. Research on climate communication shows that comments accompanying environmental videos may shape how audiences evaluate messages and respond to them (Yuan & Lu, 2023). More broadly, recent research on environmental communication on YouTube demonstrates that audience comments can reproduce, resist, and reframe the ecological meanings constructed in audiovisual content (Fantinelli, 2026).

Against this background, this study examines how Efek Rumah Kaca constructs environmental discourse through music and how audiences interpret the meanings communicated through its music videos on YouTube. By analyzing musical and audiovisual representations alongside audience comments, the study considers both the construction of environmental meanings by a cultural actor and their interpretation within a digital media

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environment. Specifically, it addresses two questions: (1) How does Efek Rumah Kaca construct environmental discourse through its selected music videos? and (2) How do audiences interpret the environmental meanings communicated through these works in the YouTube comment sections? By bringing these two dimensions together, the study extends environmental communication research beyond conventional news coverage and formal advocacy campaigns to examine music as a cultural medium of environmental advocacy and YouTube as a context for audience meaning-making.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach using netnography to examine how environmental discourse is constructed through music and interpreted by audiences within the digital context of YouTube. Netnography adapts ethnographic principles to the study of meanings, interactions, and cultural practices in digital environments (Kozinets, 2019). In this study, YouTube is approached not merely as a platform for distributing music but as a digital context in which musical and audiovisual representations of environmental issues are made available for audience interpretation. The study focuses on the official YouTube channel @efekrumahkacaofficial, examining selected music videos and their associated comment sections as interconnected materials for understanding the construction and interpretation of environmental discourse.

The research materials consisted of two types of data: (1) music video content, including songs, lyrics, and associated visual and audiovisual elements; and (2) audience comments posted in the corresponding YouTube comment sections. The music videos were examined to identify how environmental discourse was constructed through musical, lyrical, and audiovisual representations. The comments were analyzed to explore how audiences interpreted and extended the environmental meanings communicated through these works. Examining these materials together enabled the study to consider both the construction of environmental discourse through music and its interpretation within the digital context of YouTube.

The selected videos and their release dates are listed in Table 1. Purposive sampling was used to select videos and their associated comment sections during the research observation period from January 2026 to March 2026. This research focuses on selected videos whose lyrics or visual content explicitly addressed environmental or socio-ecological issues. Based on these criteria, three videos were selected for analysis. From the corresponding comment sections, 46 comments were extracted for analysis. Comments were included when they were relevant to environmental discourse or the interpretation and negotiation of environmental meanings. Spam, suspected bot-generated replies, and comments unrelated to the research focus were excluded.

Table 1. Selected Music Videos

No	Song Title	Release Date
1	*Efek Rumah Kaca*	September 2007
2	*Hujan Jangan Marah*	December 2008
3	*Merdeka*	August 2016

Source: Efek Rumah Kaca YouTube Account (2026)

Data were analyzed following the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Creswell, 2013). During data reduction, the selected video content and audience comments were reviewed and organized according to their relevance to the research questions. The video materials were examined to identify environmental themes, narratives, and representations, while the comments were reviewed to identify audience interpretations and responses to these meanings. During data display, the identified themes and comments were organized to examine the relationship between the environmental discourse constructed through the music videos and the meanings articulated by audiences. Finally, conclusions were drawn by interpreting the patterns across the video content and audience comments in relation to the study's research objectives.

The netnographic scope of this study is limited to the selected music videos and audience comments observed on the official YouTube channel during the specified data collection period. The study does not seek to represent the entire ERK audience or to establish the effects of music on environmental attitudes or behavior. Instead, it examines how environmental meanings are communicated and articulated in the selected digital materials. As Costello et al. (2017) emphasize, netnography encompasses specific practices and procedures, and studies relying primarily on online observation need to clearly articulate the nature and boundaries of their observational approach.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Environmental communication in Indonesia has evolved alongside changes in political authority, media institutions, and opportunities for public participation. During the New Order under Suharto, centralized natural resource management and economic development contributed to environmental degradation and social inequalities. Amid restrictions on opposition and public participation, environmental advocacy became a means for civil society to challenge government policies and promote democratic values, including equitable development, human rights, and public participation (Cribb, 1990). As mainstream media remained under state control, NGOs strategically used alternative channels, particularly international media, to publicize environmental conflicts and pressure government and corporate actors. Cases such as the Indorayon lawsuit (1988), the Scott–Astra project controversy (1989), and advocacy surrounding the Kedung Ombo Dam illustrate how environmental issues were framed not only as ecological concerns but also as matters of corporate accountability, human rights, and state authority (Cribb, 1990; Gordon, 1998).

The Reformasi era following the collapse of the New Order in 1998 expanded opportunities for environmental communication through greater press freedom and public participation. Environmental degradation, resource conflicts, and governance challenges became more visible in public debate, although political reform and decentralization did not necessarily lead to more equitable or sustainable resource governance (Resosudarmo, 2016). Environmental concerns also remained marginal in political competition; a study reported by *Kompas* on July 7, 1999, found that only four parties contesting the 1999 general election demonstrated a relatively strong commitment to environmental issues (Pramestusi et al., 2022). These developments highlight the role of communication in making environmental issues visible and enabling public scrutiny, while also revealing the limitations of media visibility in addressing structural problems.

Environmental communication is shaped not only by the visibility of environmental issues but also by how they are represented and interpreted. Media framing influences which aspects of an issue are emphasized, potentially foregrounding ecological degradation, public health, political accountability, or social justice (Entman, 1993). Environmental issues can be represented through different frames, where environmental news representations are similarly shaped by competing claim-makers, framing strategies, and the institutional logic of news production (Triyanti et al., 2023). Research on transboundary haze pollution in Southeast Asia further demonstrates how political and institutional contexts influence media coverage and public demands for accountability involving governments, corporations, and regional institutions such as ASEAN (Forsyth, 2014).

The expansion of digital media has created additional spaces for environmental communication, advocacy, and public engagement, although these remain shaped by political and platform-specific conditions. In China, for example, social media platforms such as Weibo have enabled environmental discussion and mobilization despite surveillance and censorship. These platforms have supported collective action around environmental issues, including protests against toxic chemicals, while international environmental NGOs such as Greenpeace have used social media to frame environmental concerns and engage audiences (Ji et al., 2018). Such developments illustrate how environmental communication extends beyond conventional journalism and formal advocacy into diverse cultural and digital spaces.

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Within this evolving landscape, music offers a cultural medium through which environmental concerns can be articulated beyond conventional news and advocacy formats. Musicians can connect ecological issues with emotional, symbolic, and sociopolitical meanings, enabling environmental discourse to circulate through popular culture. Efek Rumah Kaca provides a relevant case for examining this development. Through its musical works, the band articulates environmental concerns alongside broader social and political critiques, while its YouTube channel provides a digital context in which these messages are circulated and encountered by audiences. Examining the band's music videos and audience comments therefore offers an opportunity to understand how environmental discourse is constructed through music and interpreted within a digital media environment.

Constructing Environmental Discourse through Music

Music can function as a medium through which social and environmental issues are represented, interpreted, and communicated to broader audiences. Through lyrics, sound, and audiovisual narratives, musicians can transform complex social realities into cultural expressions that invite reflection and public engagement. Rather than relying solely on factual explanations or explicit calls for action, music can communicate environmental concerns through emotions, metaphors, and narratives that connect ecological issues with broader social and cultural experiences (Wodak, 2018; Prior, 2022; Dixon et al., 2024). In this sense, music is a communicative practice through which environmental meanings are constructed and circulated. Its potential as a medium of environmental advocacy is further demonstrated by studies of music in environmental activism, which highlight its role in articulating environmental grievances, fostering solidarity, and communicating calls for change (Pieri, 2025; Collinson & Keogh, 2024).

Efek Rumah Kaca (ERK) provides a relevant example of how musical expression can articulate environmental concerns alongside broader social criticism. The band is known for incorporating critical perspectives on social, political, and cultural issues into its musical works (Anwar & Anwar, 2019). Previous studies have examined the band's works as forms of critical expression. Ningsih et al. (2024), for instance, analyze *"Seperti Rahim Ibu"* using Roland Barthes' semiotic approach, interpreting its metaphor of the mother's womb as a symbol of life, care, and protection that contrasts with social realities marked by injustice and the abuse of power. Meanwhile, Kristi (2025) examines *"Tiada Tuhan Selain Pemilik Kapital"* in relation to agrarian conflict, farmers' rights, capitalism, and environmental exploitation. Although these studies approach ERK's music from different perspectives, they demonstrate how the band's musical expression can connect social criticism with questions concerning nature, power, and the exploitation of resources. Other research has also identified environmental concerns in ERK's lyrics, including representations of air pollution, urbanization, and ecosystem change (Hastuti & Rifa'i, 2024; Ekasari, 2019).

As a multimedia platform, YouTube offers a relevant environment for examining these communicative processes. As a platform for audiovisual distribution, it enables musical works to circulate beyond their original performance contexts and reach audiences through the combined presentation of sound, lyrics, and video (Kim, 2012; Hou, 2019). Its participatory features also allow audiences to respond to and discuss musical content, making the platform a space where cultural expressions can enter broader public discourse (Oh & Choeh, 2022). Accordingly, YouTube is approached in this study not simply as a distribution channel for ERK's music, but as a digital media environment in which environmental discourse is communicated and made available for interpretation. The environmental concerns articulated through ERK's music can be examined through selected works available on its YouTube channel, @efekrumahkacaofficial, including *"Efek Rumah Kaca," "Hujan Jangan Marah,"* and *"Merdeka."* These works address different but interconnected dimensions of environmental discourse.

The song *"Efek Rumah Kaca"* articulates environmental discourse through a warning about ecological degradation and its consequences for the Earth and future generations. The lyrics evoke environmental damage through images such as *"tipis ozon berlubang"*

("the ozone layer is thinning and full of holes"), *"debu kosmik hujan asam*" ("cosmic dust, acid rain"), *and "daun-daun berlubang"* ("leaves full of holes"), which signify atmospheric disruption and damage to the natural environment. The line "*Wajah bumi menangis, sedang kita tak mengerti"* ("The Earth is crying, while we fail to understand") further personifies the Earth, emphasizing the contrast between environmental suffering and human ignorance. This concern culminates in the repeated warning, *"Kita akan terbakar"* ("We will burn"), followed by the assertion that its consequences will be inherited by *"anak dan cucu kita"* ("our children and grandchildren"). Through its lyrical imagery and intergenerational warning, "Efek Rumah Kaca" constructs environmental discourse as a matter of ecological degradation and collective responsibility. The song frames environmental damage not only as a physical condition affecting the Earth but also as a consequence whose implications extend to future generations. In this way, the musical expression transforms ecological concerns into a cultural narrative of environmental vulnerability and human responsibility.

Meanwhile, *"Hujan Jangan Marah"* conveys the vulnerability of human life to changing and unpredictable natural conditions. The lyrics evoke a landscape marked by ecological distress, as expressed in the lines *"Gelisah dan hanya suka bertanya pada musim kering"* ("Restless, and always asking questions of the dry season"), *"Hijau pucatnya cemara"* ("The cypress trees are pale green"), and *"Terbelah di tanah yang merah"* ("Split apart in the red earth"). These images suggest a sense of unease and exhaustion in the face of environmental conditions that threaten the vitality of both nature and human life. While the lyrics may be interpreted as expressing a longing for rain to relieve drought and restore the parched landscape, the music video introduces another dimension by associating the anger of rain with flooding and its destructive consequences. The repeated phrase *"Hujan, hujan jangan marah"* ("Rain, rain, please don't be angry") thus conveys an appeal to nature not to unleash conditions that threaten human life. Although the lyrics and the music video offer distinct interpretive possibilities, both foreground the vulnerability of human communities to environmental uncertainty, whether through the absence or excess of water. In this sense, the song articulates an emotional response to the precarious relationship between humans and nature, highlighting the limits of human control over changing natural conditions.

In contrast, "Merdeka" connects environmental discourse with social justice, community rights, and the unequal control of natural resources. The opening question, *"Darat laut udara milik siapa"* ("Who owns the land, sea, and air?"), directly challenges the ownership and distribution of natural resources, positioning land, water, and air as matters of collective concern. The lyrics *"Mengais tanah, membentur langit"* ("Scraping the earth, reaching for the sky") and *"Mengering darah memutus cinta banyak saudara"* ("Blood dries up, severing the bonds of many brothers and sisters") further evoke struggle, deprivation, and social conflict. The music video's setting also connects these questions of resource ownership and freedom with Papua, where environmental exploitation and unequal resource governance have been subjects of public concern. Together, the lyrics and audiovisual narrative frame environmental issues not merely as ecological problems but as matters of community rights, social justice, and power. Through this representation, "Merdeka" extends environmental discourse to the social and political dimensions of resource governance, emphasizing the relationship between environmental justice, access to resources, and freedom from domination.

Taken together, the three selected music videos demonstrate how Efek Rumah Kaca constructs environmental discourse through interconnected ecological, social, and political narratives. *"Efek Rumah Kaca"* foregrounds global warming and the greenhouse effect, *"Hujan Jangan Marah"* evokes environmental degradation and its consequences through imagery of rain and ecological vulnerability, while *"Merdeka"* connects environmental concerns with community resistance, resource governance, and social justice. These works illustrate how environmental discourse extends beyond ecological problems to encompass the social and political conditions through which environmental issues are experienced and contested. Examining these songs and videos on YouTube highlights how musical expression and audiovisual representation serve as interconnected means of constructing and circulating environmental meanings in digital media.

Interpreting Environmental Discourse through Audience Comments

The environmental discourse constructed through ERK's music is further interpreted through audience comments on YouTube. These comments provide insights into how listeners connect the meanings communicated through the music videos with broader social, political, and ecological concerns. Rather than treating the comments as evidence of audience-wide attitudes, the analysis examines them as expressions of interpretation through which environmental meanings are articulated and extended within the digital context of the platform.

This process is particularly evident in the comments on the video *"Merdeka,"* where several netizens discuss the ownership and accessibility of natural resources. Rather than focusing exclusively on the song as a musical work, commenters connect its meanings to broader concerns about the commodification of nature and the unequal distribution of environmental resources. One comment, for example, reflects on how land, water, forests, mountains, and even oxygen are increasingly treated as privately owned commodities, concluding with the question: *"tanah, laut, udara milik siapa?"* ("To whom do the land, the sea, and the air belong?").

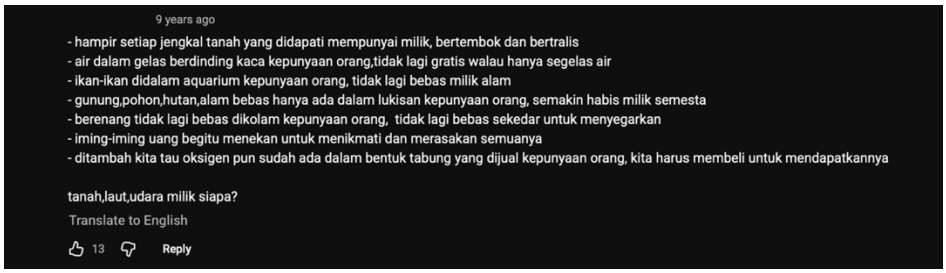


Figure 1. Audience Comment on the "*Merdeka*" Music Video
Source: Researcher Documentation (2026)

The comment, as shown in Figure 1, illustrates how the meaning of the song is extended through audience interpretation. The commenter constructs a narrative in which elements of nature that were once understood as common or freely accessible are increasingly enclosed, owned, and commercialized. The references to water, forests, swimming pools, and oxygen cylinders connect the abstract issue of resource ownership with everyday experiences of access and consumption. Through this interpretation, environmental concerns are framed not solely as matters of ecological degradation but also as questions of ownership, inequality, and the distribution of resources. The comment thus transforms the song into a point of departure for articulating a broader critique of the social and economic arrangements through which access to nature is regulated.

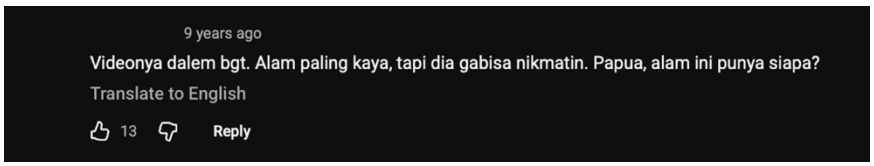


Figure 2. Audience Comment Connecting "*Merdeka*" with Papua
Source: Researcher Documentation (2026)

A similar interpretive process appears in another comment: *"Videonya dalem bgt. Alam paling kaya, tapi dia gabisa nikmatin. Papua, alam ini punya siapa?"* ("This video is profoundly moving. Nature is the greatest wealth of all, yet he cannot enjoy it. Papua—who does this land truly belong to?"). As shown in Figure 2, the commenter connects the song's meanings to Papua, raising questions about the relationship between natural wealth, local communities, and the ability to benefit from resources in their own environment. The comment introduces a tension between the abundance of natural resources and the

unequal opportunities to access or enjoy them. In this interpretation, environmental discourse intersects with issues of social justice and resource governance, illustrating how ecological concerns may be understood in relation to political and economic power.

These comments suggest that audiences do not simply reproduce the meanings communicated through ERK's music. Instead, they interpret the works through broader social experiences and concerns. The significance of these interactions also lies in the way the comment section facilitates the articulation of critical perspectives within a digital media environment. Woltermann's (2026) discussion of YouTube comment sections in Indonesia highlights their potential to function as spaces for alternative public discourse, where users can express criticism and negotiate dominant narratives. In the ERK case, the comments do not necessarily constitute a sustained or organized deliberation, but they make visible how environmental meanings can be articulated and expanded through public interaction.

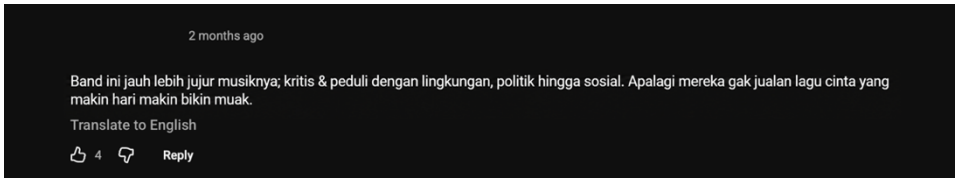


Figure 3. Audience Admiration for Efek Rumah Kaca
Source: Researcher Documentation (2026)

As shown in Figure 3, audience comments also express appreciation for ERK's musical identity and its engagement with substantive social issues. One commenter states: *"Band ini jauh lebih jujur musiknya; kritis & peduli dengan lingkungan, politik, hingga sosial. Apalagi mereka gak jualan lagu cinta yang makin hari makin bikin muak"* ("This band's music is far more honest, critical, and deeply concerned with environmental, political, and social issues. More importantly, they do not commercialize love songs that, day by day, are becoming increasingly tiresome and nauseating"). This comment reflects an audience evaluation of ERK's music as authentic and socially engaged. The commenter contrasts the band's perceived commitment to environmental, political, and social issues with commercially oriented popular music that is associated with romantic themes. Although this statement does not directly elaborate on a particular environmental problem, it demonstrates how the band's engagement with social criticism forms part of the audience's understanding of its musical identity. ERK is perceived not only as a musical act but also as a cultural actor whose works provide an alternative to entertainment-oriented expressions that the commenter considers less meaningful.

Taken together, the comments demonstrate several interconnected ways in which audiences engage with ERK's environmental discourse. First, they interpret the meanings of the songs by connecting them to issues of natural resource ownership, commodification, and access. Second, they extend these meanings to broader social and political contexts, including concerns about Papua and the unequal distribution of natural wealth. Third, they evaluate the band's musical identity in relation to its perceived authenticity and commitment to critical social issues. These forms of engagement indicate that the environmental meanings communicated through ERK's music are not confined to the songs themselves but are further articulated through audience interpretation and interaction.

The findings are particularly relevant when considered alongside research on environmental communication through digital media in Indonesia. Idris et al. (2023), in their study of YouTube comments on the environmental documentary *Sexy Killers*, found that high levels of public engagement did not necessarily translate into discussions focused on the documentary's environmental concerns. Much of the discussion instead centered on electoral politics and political candidates. This finding highlights the importance of examining not only whether audiences interact with environmental content, but also how they interpret and discuss its substantive issues. In contrast, the comments examined in the present study show that some audience interpretations of ERK's *"Merdeka"* explicitly address natural resource ownership, commodification, and inequality. The comparison

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underscores the value of analyzing the content of audience interaction rather than treating engagement metrics alone as evidence of environmental communication.

Overall, the comment section of ERK's YouTube channel functions as an interactional space where environmental meanings are extended beyond musical and audiovisual representations. Through their comments, netizens connect the band's works with everyday experiences, broader socio-political concerns, and critical perspectives on the ownership and distribution of natural resources. This suggests that environmental communication through popular music involves not only the construction of discourse by cultural actors but also the ways audiences interpret and negotiate that discourse in digital spaces. In this context, YouTube comments offer a valuable site for understanding how environmental concerns become part of public discussion through music and participatory media.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how Efek Rumah Kaca (ERK) constructs environmental discourse through music and how audiences interpret the meanings communicated through its music videos on YouTube. The findings demonstrate that ERK articulates environmental concerns through interconnected ecological, social, and political narratives. The three selected music videos, *"Efek Rumah Kaca," "Hujan Jangan Marah,"* and "*Merdeka*," communicate environmental concerns through different but related perspectives, including global warming and the greenhouse effect, environmental degradation and ecological vulnerability, and natural resource ownership, community resistance, and social justice. These representations illustrate how music can function as a medium of environmental advocacy by connecting ecological concerns with broader social experiences and power relations.

The analysis of YouTube comments further reveals how audiences interpret and extend the environmental meanings communicated through ERK's music. The selected comments connect the songs and videos with concerns about resource ownership, the commodification of nature, environmental inequality, and social and political conditions. These interpretations demonstrate that environmental discourse communicated through music may acquire additional meanings when encountered and interpreted by audiences within digital media environments. By examining musical and audiovisual representations alongside audience comments, this study highlights the relationship between the construction of environmental discourse through music and its interpretation within the digital context of YouTube.

Theoretically, this study contributes to environmental communication and media studies by examining music as a cultural medium of environmental advocacy and by highlighting audience interpretation as a dimension of environmental discourse in digital media. Practically, the findings offer insights for artists, environmental organizations, and communication practitioners seeking to communicate environmental concerns through cultural expression. However, the interpretations identified in the selected comments should not be equated with audience-wide environmental attitudes, behavioral change, or the effectiveness of music as an advocacy strategy. These outcomes require further empirical investigation.

Future research could examine environmental discourse through music across different artists, genres, and digital platforms to explore how cultural and platform contexts shape environmental representations and audience interpretations. Comparative or mixed-methods research could also investigate the relationship between exposure to environmental music, audience interpretation, environmental attitudes, and pro-environmental behavior.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

M. Agung Pramana: Conceptualization; Methodology; Investigation; Data Curation; Writing – original draft. **Dony Arung Triantoro:** Validation; Formal analysis; Supervision; Writing – review & editing.

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The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI AND AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES

The authors acknowledge the use of generative AI tools solely for language editing to improve the clarity, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and readability of the manuscript. These tools were not used to develop the research design, analyze data, interpret findings, or generate the substantive content of the manuscript. The authors take full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and originality of the manuscript. No confidential, personal, or proprietary data were shared with any AI system during manuscript preparation.

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