



K-Popers and ARMY BTS: An uprising subculture community in Indonesia

Yayah Cheriya^{1*}, Amanda Rochima Hadi²

¹ Universitas Nasional, Jl. Sawo Manila No.61, Jakarta, Indonesia 12520

² STIKES Insan Unggul Surabaya, Jl. Raya Kletek No.4, Kletek, Taman, Sidoarjo, Indonesia 61257

* Corresponding author

E-mail address: yayahchan@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21107/sml.v5i2.17041>

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><i>Keywords:</i> fans culture fanaticism K-Pop Indonesia fandom ARMY BTS</p>	<p>This article investigated the fans' identity among ARMY BTS Indonesia, the fandom name for BTS fans. The study aimed to explore factors driving K-Pop fanaticism in Indonesia in general and how it affected their dynamics within the society. Using a quantitative method through online surveys based on the fans-identity scale approach, the research surveyed a total of 243 fans in Indonesia using a network sampling approach. Results showed that fans were considerably proud to be recognized as BTS fans. In terms of the drives of their fanaticism, three main factors played into the role namely: the enjoyment feelings surged when listening to BTS music, the emotional connection toward BTS, and the social connection. These three factors were well correlated, reflecting the same construct. The latter incorporated the fans' fascination toward idols' works and their need to actively participate in online platforms. Fans' participation in online platforms not only catered for their need to socialize with fans alike and showcase their adoration toward their idols but also being able to proudly show their identity as loyal fans.</p>

Citation suggestion:

Cheriyah, Y., & Hadi, A. R. (2022). K-Popers: An uprising subculture community in Indonesia. *Simulacra*, 5(2), 85–98. <https://doi.org/10.21107/sml.v5i2.17041>

Received 29 September 2022; Received in revised form 3 November 2022; Accepted 3 November 2022; Published online 25 November 2022.

Introduction

Fans, as an abbreviation of fanatics, can be interpreted as devotees where it originally derived from the Latin word “fanaticus”, a literal definition of “a temple servant, a devotee” (Samra & Wos, 2015). Jenkins (in Kloet and Zoonen 2007) defines fans as a worshipper with a negative connotation which is on the same wavelength definition as obsession and madness considering that their behavior is different compared to what the general public deemed normal. They have their made-believe reality built up from their imagination surrounding their object of obsession. K-Pop fans, in general, are identical with this negative definition of fans since they have a high level of loyalty as well as due to negative media narratives surrounding them (Rahmayani, 2020; Lestari, 2021; TribunNews, 2021). Similar to Jenkins, previous studies on fanaticism also indicated negative behavior from idolizing activities, although some showed positive attitudes toward these activities (Thorne & Bruner, 2006; Vinney et al, 2019; Kloet and Zoonen, 2007; Chansanam et al, 2021). This negative behavior ranges from light adoration to obsession. Few obsessive fans tend to create a negative image of the whole fans among the general public. Thus, the majority of people consider idolizing activities synonymous with excessive obsession, for example stalking their idols (Rae, 2015; Vinney et al, 2019; Thorne & Bruner, 2006; Kloet & Zoonen, 2007). This phenomenon is also found among K-Pop fans in South East Asia (Williams & Ho, 2015; Chansanam. W et al, 2021; Smutradontri & Gadavanij, 2020).

By contrast, other research showed how fanaticism actually provides a positive influence on fans’ well-being, which in turn manifest in their demeanor (Laffan, 2020; Lozano et al, 2020). However, fans’ image and identity are also strongly affected by media narratives and how the general

public emotional response to them (Oliver & Bartsch, 2011; Vinney et al, 2019). In the case of Indonesia, few recent media are more likely to cover the negative behavior of fans (Rahmayani, 2020; Lestari, 2021; TribunNews, 2021). This may be due to the growing concerns about how these fans have transference of local cultural identity to K-Pop culture (Gunawan, 2021; Zakiyah, 2022).

Indonesian ARMY, the established name for BTS (*Bangtan Sonyeondan*) fandom, is often associated with bad stereotypes, ranging from unpleasant behavior towards non-fans or rude interactions between fellow fans (Rahmayani, 2020; Lestari, 2021; TribunNews, 2021). This negative stereotyping and harsh criticism create reluctance among fans to publicly admit that they are fans (CNN Indonesia, 2019; Nursalikhah, 2020; Astriningtias, 2020). This is contrary to the common notion where usually fandoms with large fan-based tend to use their fandom identity as an iconic attribute in their daily activities (Geraghty, 2014, Chan et al, 2012, Wang et al, 2020). This behavior is part of their way to exhibit self-images and personal branding as fans, a way to distinguish themselves from the general public.

Several previous studies have found that external factors such as the social environment or media coverage affect the psychosocial well-being of fans. It further explores the fact that media narratives on the object of adoration and their activities can have a positive or negative impact on their fans. The former depends on how the narratives are made concerning idolizing activities (Lozano et al, 2020). In other words, media narratives factors in how fans would like to be perceived by society, whether they want to be acknowledged as fans or just hide their identity as fans. Hiding their identity as fans, however, is affecting fans’ well-being as well as their social life. Even on a larger

scale, it will affect the identity of fans as a whole (Vinney et al, 2019; Williams & Ho, 2015; Chansanam. W et al, 2021).

Aside from these internal effects on fans, this issue also affects fans' externalization. The latter includes not only social interactions with the non-fan community (media and general public) but also with fellow fans. Within the fan community, a group of fans will form a group known as a fandom. Tajfel & Turner in Jin & Minyoung (2008) describes fandom as a form of the social identity of a group of fans with certain characteristics such as abilities, interests, hobbies, and social identity. These characteristics create a uniqueness that made them stand out and even set them apart from similar fans group. Others sometimes see fandom as a political identity; a group that is different from other social or political groups in society (Reysen and Branscombe, 2010; Kloet & Zonnen, 2007). The latter perspective derives from the evolution of Bourdieuan theories to fandom. Fiske (1992) and Thornton (1995) argued that in the attempt of gains to distinguish themselves from non-fans, fans' work garners "fans' cultural capital" or "popular cultural capital", in regard to their knowledge and literacy on their object of devotion. This accumulation was then used to spread the "cultural capital" through the level of education and "training" and the appreciation that a cultural agent holds. An attempt to create an even bigger community. Thus, this sociological focus has led to fan cultures as "resistant" communities that were free of power imbalance and struggle over status, beyond economic capital (iResearchnet, 2018).

Fandoms were usually formed due to the increasing need for fans to share the psychological bonding of idolizing idols (Reysen and Branscombe, 2010). This bond more often than not is used by fans as their psychological strength when socializing; a way that indirectly creates self-confidence.

This fandom phenomenon is generally seen among Hallyu fans, especially K-Pop, all over the world. Compared to other Hallyu content (K-drama, K-movies, K-beauty, K-food, K-games, and K-webtoons and animations), K-Pop has more loyal fans and long-lasting fandom. In Indonesia, these fandoms are originally formed as a place to share stories and their passion for enjoying the works of the idol. However, over time, this group also carries out other activities that support idolization activities such as merchandise group purchases, collective donations for gifting their idols, and joint efforts to celebrate their idol's birthday. In Indonesia, K-Pop fandom has integrated easily into all walks of life and formed its own community. According to a survey conducted by several agencies in 2020 in various countries, the number of ARMY, BTS fan-based, in Indonesia is the third largest in the world. For the Asian continent itself, Indonesia has the highest number of fans, constituting 20% of the total population of Asian fans (BTSARMY Census, 2020; Intan, 2020).

Taking into account the definition and problem explained, this research aims to determine (1) what factors drive K-Pop fanaticism in Indonesia in general; (2) how that factors affect their dynamics within the society amid the negative narratives and stereotypes.

Method

Previous research on fans' experience and their reaction to certain popular culture phenomena found that fans' self-image can be measured through a standardized systematic parameter, the fans' identity scale. This scale was built based on fans' enthusiasm toward their object of adoration, social behavior, and meaningful interactions surrounding it (Vinney et al, 2019; Lozano et al, 2020; Maltby & Day, 2017). This

parameter was an improved development from the previous scales from the celebrity attitude scale and parasocial interaction scale (McCutcheon et al, 2002; Vinney et al 2019; Taylor, 2015). However, the improvement was made since the previous scale was unable to fully capture some dedicated fans. The scale translated fans' self-image into internal factors (affective, cognitive) and external factors (social, participative) (Vinney et al 2019; Reysen & Branscombe, 2010; Lozano et al, 2020; Hofer, 2013). Examining these factors, this study structured different statements to represent each factor. All those statements were then loaded into an online questionnaire platform (Google Form).

This study specifically targeted BTS (*Bangtan Sonyeondan*) fans in Indonesia based on the premise of the large number of fans based in Indonesia. Indonesian fan-based numbers were constituting 20% of the total population of Asian fans with BTS as the largest K-Pop fandom worldwide in 2020 (BTSARMY Census, 2020; Intan, 2020). In view of this fan's community structure, this study opted to apply network sampling. This method was chosen based on the assumption of the members of each fan's group/community, fandom, know one another. Network sampling, a type of snowball sampling approach, appropriately increased the initial sample through the relationship with fans who have already been sampled (Lohr, 2021). Using this chain-referral method, this study contacted about 10 different fans community/fandom through social media (Instagram account) and instant messenger applications (Telegram group and WhatsApp Group). Using this method, among 258 respondents who were answering the questionnaire, only 243 were usable.

All respondents were asked to rank the statements using a 7.0 Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The analysis of this study consists of two

stages. First, descriptive analysis was carried out to establish the fans' profiles in general. It contained the respondent's demographic data (e. g. age, city of residence, gender, and occupation) and behavioral data. Meanwhile, the fan behavior questions included ownership of BTS albums, frequency of watching BTS live and/or online concerts, and their social media usage behavior. The latter was featuring time spent following social media accounts that cover BTS' news and the length of time fans were an ARMY (BTS fandom). These data aimed to provide a complete picture of the image of BTS fans in Indonesia. Second, statements asked about factors analyzed using the oblique rotation approach. This approach was chosen since it is expected that factors be related. The procedure was then further processed using eigenvalue, scalar/norms used as a measurement in factorial analysis, and scree plot to delineate items with low loadings and removed cross-loading. The procedure used two main criteria: (1) all factors should have an eigenvalue greater than one; (2) each factor delineated 4% of the total variance. The latter was used since factors that lower than 0.4 tends to load two or more factors.

Results and Discussion

The result showed the validity of the instrument with the value meeting the 0.50 limit, while Cronbach Alpha is 0.977.

Table 1: Respondents Demographic (N=243)

Demographics		Percentage
Gender	Male	1.2
	Female	98.8
Age	<18 years old	9.5
	18-24 years old	49.4
	25-29 years old	19.3
	30-39 years old	15.6
	> 40 years old	6.2
Occupation	Students	52.3
	Working on private sectors	30.0

Demographics	Percentage
Freelance	11.9
Civil servants	2.9
Professional	2.1
City	
Jabodetabek (Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, Bekasi)	63.8
Surabaya	6.2
Bandung	9.5

Source: own data and illustration

Based on Table 1 above, the majority of respondents were female fans aged between 18 to 29 years old. This number was striking compared to the other aged group with only 21.8% of respondents were aged over 29 years old. This younger age group were logical considering that 52.3% of the respondents were students. More than 150 respondents (63.8%) were living in the Greater Jakarta area (Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi). One of the possible reasons behind this high percentage was due to the notion that big cities have more ease in absorbing foreign pop culture compared to smaller cities (Gunawan, 2021; Zakiyah, 2022). A well-developed infrastructure in these big cities that support digitalization, information transformation, and acceleration also played a major role in doing so.

Completing Table 1 on demographic, Table 2 showed respondents behavioral data in regards to their fanaticism toward BTS group. For more than 60% of the total respondents admitted to learn about BTS from their inner circle, friends and/or family member. Most of them had been fans since BTS debut years in 2010. Despite being fans for more than 5 years, they had less inclination to own BTS album, about 46.5% or about 113 respondents admitted to have none. Even more so, the majority of respondents never went to BTS live concerts even though BTS had held concerts twice in Indonesia, in 2015 and 2017. This low buying behavior might be influenced by the age group. Considering there was more than 50% of the respondents were students, the likelihood of them being financially dependent were considerably high. The price of BTS album or live concert ticket was substantially high for financially dependent students (Kistyarini, 2017). Aside from the price factor, streaming services as an alternative to enjoying BTS songs/albums may also play in affecting fans' decision to buy physical albums. Currently, there were numbers of music online streaming and non-streaming services that provide easy access for users to enjoy music at a lower price

Table 2: Behavioural Data (N=243)

Behavioural Factors	Percentage	
Knowing BTS from	Friends, family	37.9
	Radio/Streaming/Non-streaming platform	32.5
	Media (online/offline)	15.6
	TV	8.6
	Social media (Tiktok, Instagram, Twitter)	2.9
	Others	2.5
Years of being BTS fan	Less than 1 year	18.1
	1-3 years	36.6
	4-6 years	32.1
	More than 7 years	13.2
Ownership of BTS album	None	46.5
	Less than 3	29.2
	4-6 pieces	15.2
	More than 7	9.1
Times watching live BTS concerts	Never	93.4

Behavioural Factors	Percentage	
Times watching online live concerts	1 time	5.3
	2 time	0.8
	More than 2	0.4
Time spent for fangirling activity	Never	15,3
	1 time	10,7
	2 time	18,2
	More than 2	55,8
Time spent for fangirling activity	Less than 1 hour	17.7
	1-3 hour	37.0
	4-5 hour	19.3
	More than 5 hours	25.5

Source: own data and illustration

compared to the actual album. Even though most fans were reluctant to buy albums or attend live concerts, more than 60% of them admitted to having watched BTS online concerts and owned merchandise.

Drives to Fanaticism

Using the two criteria (eigenvalues >1 and percentage of variance greater than 0.4)

to determine the underlying components, the analysis generated 3 factors explaining a total of 67.96% of the variance in data. There were only 24 statements met those criteria. The Kaiser Meyer Olkin measured was 0.942. This number was higher than the recommended threshold of 0.6 and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p < .001$).

Table 3: Factor Loadings and Communalities for Promax Rotated 3 Factor Solution

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Communalities
1. I am a big fan of BTS.	0,887	-0,015	0,060	0,755
2. I am passionate everything about BTS	0,884	-0,056	0,136	0,763
3. Listening songs or watching BTS MV makes me happy.	0,883	0,015	-0,152	0,836
4. Everything about BTS entertain me.	0,879	-0,024	-0,048	0,821
5. I enjoy listening BTS music/MV or even reading articles on BTS.	0,874	0,119	-0,159	0,693
6. I am excited in all things BTS.	0,844	-0,068	0,149	0,707
7. I love BTS very much.	0,844	0,011	0,034	0,749
8. Listening songs/watching MV/reading articles on BTS is a good way to pass the time	0,835	0,129	-0,151	0,799
9. I like reading any news about BTS.	0,560	0,114	0,253	0,815
10.BTS gives me emotional support.	0,018	0,925	-0,147	0,776
11.BTS helps me think about the things I value in life.	0,129	0,824	-0,073	0,738
12.BTS makes me feel like I am part of something bigger	0,169	0,792	-0,031	0,772
13.BTS is relevant to my life.	0,163	0,762	-0,008	0,575
14.I would like to go to fans meeting/IG Live/Youtube Live or any BTS live event.	0,000	0,743	-0,018	0,552
15.I feel like my life story resembled one of BTS' song.	-0,152	0,736	0,165	0,541
16.I identify with one of BTS member.	-0,074	0,705	0,159	0,536
17.I like to buy objects memorabilia of BTS.	0,105	0,595	0,062	0,507
18.I want everyone know that I am ARMY.	0,145	0,468	0,223	0,648

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Communalities
19.I like to write fan fiction about BTS.	-0,093	-0,118	0,953	0,698
20.I like to create fan art (videos, drawings, etc) about BTS.	-0,120	0,049	0,808	0,623
21.I like reading fan fiction about BTS.	-0,061	-0,003	0,746	0,731
22.I like to go into conventions or social gatherings that feature BTS.	0,051	0,127	0,679	0,516
23.I like to participate in online discussions about BTS.	0,014	0,279	0,631	0,618
24.I like to watch/see fan art (videos, reels, pictures, etc) about BTS.	0,291	-0,098	0,626	0,542

Source: own data and illustration

Table 3 showed 3 different factors influencing fans in driving their fanaticism. Factor 1 (eigenvalue=12.63) scores the highest eigenvalue with 52.18% total per cent variance. This first factor was labelled “the joy of the music” where fans felt that their love for BTS was rooted in their love of BTS works. The idol’s work here includes but is not limited to their music, music videos, or even their personal works (e.g., charities, social work). Factor 1 included being a big fan of BTS, enjoying BTS works (the music and music video), and enjoying time spent reading any updates on BTS.

The pandemic situation could be one of the main driving forces for high loadings on factor 1. During the pandemic, fans were forced to increase their social distancing resulting in spending more time at home. Most outdoor activities were turned into online-based activities. These phenomena lead to a rise in online social media usage as well as other online channels as described in table 2. The rising online activities were also escalating the frequency of fans using online services, both streaming and non-streaming, to listen to their favorite musicians. Fans could easily enjoy their favorite songs while doing work, studying, or even during downtime/relaxing time. It was reflected in the behavioral data where most respondents spent time frequently visiting idols’ channels and any streaming services that provide their music.

These frequent visits certainly affected the way the related channel read their

algorithm. The more they spent time enjoying BTS works (music and/or videos) or searching related online fan art and/or fiction, the higher probability the channels suggested similar postings. Thus, creating a snowballing effect where they were bombarded with more content on idols’ videos, music, or related fan art. This could be seen from the high number of views on most BTS videos that were posted by their official channel. For Butter’s official MV (Music Video) alone, YouTube recorded the videos that had been watched by more than 692 million up to February 2022. As for the rest of BTS MV (Music Videos), it also reached the threshold of a million views.

Factor 2 (eigenvalue=2.441) scores 10.17% total percent variance. This factor was labelled as “emotional connection toward BTS” because of the high loadings by the following statements: getting emotional support and/or emotional connection from BTS and their works, BTS works and persona was relevant for them, and how they identify themselves with BTS songs and personas. They felt that BTS have gone through the same experiences. A feeling of camaraderie. This was further highlighted by the high score of “participation” and “social interaction”.

This type of fan not only enjoyed their idols’ works but also felt a deeper connection with their works. They believe that BTS, both works and personalities, represents their values, standards, and even their sense of self. They feel the need to show their

appreciation and gratitude through the use of memorabilia/merchandise. These findings support previous research where the more substantial the fans' identification, the more fans gravitate toward using idol/group symbols (Jones, 2015; Plante et al, 2014, Chadborn et al, 2017). This use of symbols, in the form of merchandise or fashion items, was their way to show their loyalty toward their idols as well as their identity as loyal fans. The latter was also a way for them to create social ties by creating connections with people/groups with the same interest. Yet, at the same time, the use of symbols was also a way to distinguish themselves within the crowds. This phenomenon was congruous with optimal distinctiveness theory, where a person was characterized by two opposing needs of individual self-concept and membership in a social group (Geraghty, 2014, Chan et al, 2012).

Factor 3 (eigenvalue=1.243), labelled as "socially connected", represents fans that felt strongly toward BTS due to the excitement they feel when expressing their adoration within their social circles. Scoring 5.178% total percent variance, they feel great

pleasure when bringing up the subject of BTS when they connect socially. They are the buzzers within the fans' community. They are actively seeking groups, and talks, and even participate in spreading their love of BTS.

Almost similar to factor 2, factor 3 also showed the use of symbols as prominent fans' identities in the general public or even within their closed group of fandoms. However, unlike factor 2 where the fans used merchandise or fashion item as a symbol, fans with high factor 3 preferred to highlight their identity through creative inventions of secondary artworks. Coinciding with Liao (2021), these secondary artworks worked as an outlet to create a distinctive self-idealized identity and characters. Using their display of secondary arts, fans not only showed their unique identity but also as a means of communication for them as a cultural agent. A way for them to "recruit" non-fans to join their uprising subcultures of fandom. This platform also provides them with a platform to channel their sense of devotion toward their idols aside from channeling creativity and showing off skills.

Table 4: Mean Value, Standard Deviation (SD), Factor Loading (λ) and Cronbach Alpha (α)

Factor/Item	Mean	SD	λ	α	Criterion
Factor 1: The joy of the music				0.955	
1. I am a big fan of BTS.	6,71	0,69	0,887		Very High
2. I am passionate everything about BTS	6,51	0,93	0,884		Very High
3. Listening songs or watching BTS MV makes me happy.	6,61	0,88	0,883		Very High
4. Everything about BTS entertain me.	6,37	1,10	0,879		Very High
5. I enjoy listening BTS music/MV or even reading articles on BTS.	6,26	1,10	0,874		Very High
6. I am excited in all things BTS.	6,50	0,87	0,844		Very High
7. I love BTS very much.	6,45	0,95	0,844		Very High
8. Listening songs/watching MV/reading articles on BTS is a good way to pass the time	6,58	0,73	0,835		Very High
9. I like reading any news about BTS.	6,07	1,28	0,560		Very High
Factor 2: emotional connection toward BTS				0.926	
10. BTS gives me emotional support.	5,82	1,45	0,925		High
11. BTS helps me think about the things I value in life.	5,98	1,43	0,824		High
12. BTS makes me feel like I am part of something bigger	5,15	1,90	0,792		High
13. BTS is relevant to my life.	6,33	1,17	0,762		Very High

Factor/Item	Mean	SD	λ	α	Criterion
14.I would like to go to fans meeting/IG Live/Youtube Live or any BTS live event.	6,12	1,34	0,743		Very High
15.I feel like my life story resembled one of BTS' song.	6,33	1,11	0,736		Very High
16.I identify with one of BTS member.	5,48	1,62	0,705		High
17.I like to buy objects memorabilia of BTS.	5,88	1,36	0,595		High
18.I want everyone know that I am ARMY.	5,37	1,62	0,468		High
Factor 3: socially connected				0.859	
19.I like to write fan fiction about BTS.	5,56	1,67	0,953		High
20.I like to create fan art (videos. drawings. etc) about BTS.	3,37	2,20	0,808		Moderate
21.I like reading fan fiction about BTS.	4,08	2,19	0,746		Moderate
22.I like to go into conventions or social gatherings that feature BTS.	4,74	2,26	0,679		Moderate
23.I like to participate in online discussions about BTS.	5,04	1,86	0,631		High
24.I like to watch/see fan art (videos. reels. pictures. etc) about BTS.	5,03	1,82	0,626		High

Source: own data and illustration

From Table 4, it could be seen that three factors derived from Promax rotation had alpha exceeding the threshold of 0.5. Generally, fans showed a positive response and relishing in BTS's works considering the high number of means of the statements factored. The three driving forces of fanaticism show that BTS works (music and videos) were the core value. In fact, it further encouraged the creation of secondary artworks such as fan art in the form of videos, reels, fictional stories, and illustrations.

These high scores were not surprising considering that respondents were BTS fans who had mostly become their fans since BTS's debut year, creating deeper loyalty and higher enthusiasm toward their works. However, the lowest three mean scores still have a considerably moderate mean score.

The lowest statement of "I like creating fan art" were considerably low with 3.37 nearing the mean score threshold of 3.0. This low figure was quite reasonable considering that the creation of secondary art required an artistic skillset and keen sense of arts, something more likely needed a distinctive skill and expertise. This particular statement could be also the driving force behind the high mean score on the statement "I like to watch/see fan art (videos, reels, pictures, etc.) about BTS". Fans, who were reluctant in creating fan art/fiction, often preferred to enjoy their colleagues' works and were involved more in fangirling activities. It supported the finding in behavioral data where there was a high percentage of fans doing fangirling activities for more than 3 hours per day.

Table 5: Correlations among Extracted Factors after Promax Rotation

	1	2	3	Mean (SD)
Factor 1	--	--	--	
Factor 2	.716	--	--	
Factor 3	.467	.592	--	

Source: own data and illustration

Table 5 indicated that the three dimensions of fans' self-image were well correlated. However, factors 1 and 3 were more closely related, reflecting the same construct. The strongest correlations figure was between factor 1 "the joy of music" and factor 2 "the emotional connection". Both factors had interrelated items where BTS works (music and videos) were the main source of their fascination with BTS. While factor 1 was rooted in the simplicity of having the pleasure of enjoying BTS works, factor 2 was rooted in how fans find a deeper emotional connection toward BTS works and personas. Fans' feelings toward their idols were deepened the more they spent time doing online fangirling or listening to music via online channels. It was even more so as the algorithm constantly offered them similar content.

The increased usage of the online platform not only gave fans the easiness of accessing their favorite music or videos but also gave them an effective way to collaborate with fans alike. The online platform created an impressive cluster of fans by bringing together fans through shared emotions and sentiments using postings. This corresponded with the play theory of mass communication where online forums and/or platforms went beyond practical communication and only for the pleasure of self (Liao, 2021; Rheingold, 2003). Fans were immersed in enjoyable active play such as posting, commenting, and participating in online discussions.

The second highest correlation between factor 2 "the emotional connection" and factor 3 "socially connected" with 0.592. Looking closer, these two factors were connected through fans' involvement in online platforms whether as a platform to channel their fanaticism or to socialize. Advances in technology as a means of communication made fandom activities seem limitless. It enforced millions of

fans worldwide to involve in various fan activities. These active involvements of fans in online platforms further established an online-based fans community that attracted not only fans alike but also non-fans. This online-based fan community had proven to create an effective collaboration that triggered emotional consensus through similar sentiments and shared emotions. It also tended to generate collective identity by coming together as a group, which further heightened the emotional consensus. This emotional atmosphere could as well lead to collective effervescences. However, this heightened emotional atmosphere could cause discursive hegemony. A phenomenon where fans created an illusion that idols were popular using repeated posts about their idols, creating false popularity (Liao, 2021; Rheingold, 2003).

Conclusion

Indonesian K-Pop fans, especially BTS fans, showed a strong internalization and externalization driven by three main factors: the joy of music, emotional connection, and social connectedness. These three factors encouraged self-confidence and a sense of pride when showing their identity as fans. This solid sense of internalization motivated them to "recruit" non-fans, creating a social buzz on their knowledge about their idols. It was also rooted in the need for social recognition as well as being in the same group of people with similar interests. A new beginning of the long journey of an uprising of K-Poppers as a subculture.

These three factors were independent motivations though interconnected with one another with some underlying construct. The use of symbols in fans' externalization was one of the main conceptions tying the 3 factors though differ from one fan to another. Few fans preferred using merchandise as a showcase of their loyalty,

while others might create and support the use of secondary artworks about their object of devotion. Another underlying component was the need for social raving along with the need to be in a group, explaining the high percentage of time spent on online fangirling and involving online events (e.g. attending online concerts, commenting and posting on online fan arts, or participating during online discussions). This active participation was then later on recognized as part of fan culture or fan community activities as it brought together as one big cohesive group, showing fans to the general public as one collective identity, as well as heightening the collective effervescences.

In the end, there were several suggestions for further research on K-Pop fans in Indonesia, especially BTS Indonesia. First, expansion of the research's scope area in regards to a larger geographical area or larger sample number considering how diverse the Indonesian population was. In this sense, fans' behavior not only would be well mapped but also could be used as a solid parameter for other countries. Second future research on the price sensitivity of merchandising and membership as part of monetizing efforts for the entertainment business, since this area was a rather promising business venture with a large market.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the Universitas Nasional for providing the necessary support for this research. In addition, we also thank our fellow fan group administrators who are willing to provide the opportunity to share our research link.

Declaration of Ownership

This article is our original work.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest to declare in this article.

Ethical Clearance

This study was approved by the institution.

References

- Astriningtias., J. (2020). Menyoal fanatisme K-Pop dan dampak psikologisnya. *Ketik Unpad*. <https://ketik.unpad.ac.id/posts/388/menyoal-fanatisme-K-Pop-dan-dampak-psikologisnya>
- BTSARMYCensus. (2020). *2020 results*. <https://www.btsarmycensus.com/2020-results>
- Chadborn, D., Edwards, P., & Reysen, S. (2017). Displaying fan identity to make friends. *Intensities: The Journal of Cult Media*, 9, 87–97.
- Chan, C., Berger, J., & Van Boven, L. (2012). 'Identifiable but not identical: combining social identity and uniqueness motives in choice', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39, (3), 561-573. <https://doi.org/10.1086/664804>
- Chansanam, W., Tuamsuk, K., Kwiecien, K., Sutthiprapa, K., & Oh., S. (2021). An analysis of the Korean popular culture on social media: Examination of the Thai fandom through Twitter in Thailand. *Journal of Management Information and Decision Sciences*, 24(7), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.26555/ijain.v7i3.769>

- CNNIndonesia. (2019). Bahaya di balik fenomena candu K-Pop. *CNN Indonesia*. <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/hiburan/20190202171900-227-365989/bahaya-di-balik-fenomena-candu-K-Pop>
- Delmar, J. L., Plaza, J. F., & Sanchez-Martin, M. (2020). An approach to defining the identity of a media fan. *Palabra Clave*, 23(2), 1–29. <https://doi.org/10.5294/pacla.2020.23.2.3>
- Fiske, J. (1992) The cultural economy of fandom. In: Lewis, L. A. (Ed.), *The adoring audience: Fan culture and popular media*. Routledge.
- Geraghty, L. (2014). *Cult collectors*. Routledge.
- Gunawan, H. (2021). Nilai etika dalam tatanan globalisasi dan digitalisasi budaya. *Jurnal Sosial Sains*, 1(7), 645–653. <https://doi.org/10.36418/sosains.v1i7.111>
- Hofer, M. (2013). Appreciation and enjoyment of meaningful entertainment. *Journal of Media Psychology*, 25(3), 109–117. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1864-1105/a000089>
- Intan, P. (2020). Turis datang ke Korea karena K-Pop, Indonesia mau tiru? *Detik travel*. <https://travel.detik.com/travel-news/d-5097322/turis-datang-ke-korea-karena-K-Pop-indonesia-mau-tiru>
- iResearchnet. (2018). *Fan culture: Sociology of culture*. <http://sociology.iresearchnet.com/sociology-of-culture/fan-culture/>
- Jin, Y., Jieun, K., & Miyoung, L. (2018). Purchasing behavior of K-Pop idol goods consumers in Korea. *패션비즈니스*, 22(6), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.12940/jfb.2018.22.6.1>
- Jones, B. (2015) 'Fannish tattooing and sacred identity'. *Transformative Works and Cultures*, 18, 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.3983/twc.2015.0626>
- Kistayarini., (2017). Tiket konser BTS ludes, di calo ditawarkan Rp 9 juta. *Kompas*. <https://entertainment.kompas.com/read/2017/04/07/101134910/tiket.konser.bts.ludes.di.calo.ditawarkan.rp.9.juta?page=all>
- Kloet, J. D. & Zoonen, L. V. (2007). Fan culture: Performing difference. In Eoin, D. *Media Studies: Key Issues and Debates*. Sage Publication.
- Laffan, D. A. (2020). Positive psychosocial outcomes and fanship in K-Pop fans: A social identity theory perspective. *Psychological Reports*, 124(5), 2272–2285. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033294120961524>
- Lestari., (2021). Dianggap bawa pengaruh 'negatif' di Pakistan, iklan billboard ulang tahun Jungkook BTS dicopot. *Pikiran rakyat*. <https://pangandaran.pikiran-rakyat.com/entertainment/pr-102527234/dianggap-bawa-pengaruh-negatif-di-pakistan-iklan-billboard-ulang-tahun-jungkook-bts-dicopot>
- Liao, Z. (2021). Fan culture under the influence of media development. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 9(12), 88–93. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2021.912007>
- Lohr, S. L. (2021). *Sampling: Design and analysis (3rd ed.)*. Chapman and Hall.
- Maltby, J., & Day, L. (2017). Regulatory motivations in celebrity interest: Self-suppression and self-expansion. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 6(2), 103-112. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000087>
- McCutcheon, L. E., Lange, R., & Houran, J. (2002). Conceptualization and measurement of celebrity worship. *British Journal of Psychology*, 93(1), 67–87. <https://doi.org/10.1348/000712602162454>
- Nursalikhah, A. (2020). Dunia fandom, benarkah penggemar K-Pop berperilaku buruk? *Republika*. <https://www.republika.co.id/berita/qqwfa366/dunia-fandom-benarkah-penggemar-kpop-berperilaku-buruk>

- Oliver, M. B., & Bartsch, A. (2011). Appreciation of entertainment: The importance of meaningfulness via virtue and wisdom. *Journal of Media Psychology*, 23(1), 29-33. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1864-1105/a000029>
- Plante, C.N., Roberts, S., Reysen, S., & Gerbasi, K. (2014) 'Interaction of socio-structural characteristics predicts identity concealment and self-esteem in stigmatized minority group members. *Current Psychology*, 33, 3-19. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-013-9189-y>
- Plante, C. N., Reysen, S., Roberts, S. E., & Gerbasi, K. C. (2016). *FurScience! A summary of five years of research from the international anthropomorphic research project*. FurScience.
- Rae, K. B. (2015). Past, present, and future of Hallyu (Korean Wave). *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 5(5), 154-160.
- Rahmayani. (2020). V BTS ultah, ARMY Indonesia rayakan dengan aksi perahu Taehyung bantu nelayan. *Karawang Post*. <https://karawangpost.pikiran-rakyat.com/regional/pr-1423354667/v-bts-ultah-army-indonesia-rayakan-dengan-aksi-perahu-taehyung-bantu-nelayan>
- Reysen, S., & Branscombe, N. R. (2010). Fanship and fandom: Comparisons between sport and non-sport fans. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 33(2), 176-193.
- Rheingold, H. (2003). *Smart mobs: The next social revolution*. Perseus Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.3917/soc.079.0075>
- Samra, B., & Wos, A. (2015). Consumer in sports: Fan typology analysis. *Journal of Intercultural Management*, 6(4-1), 263-288. <https://doi.org/10.2478/joim-2014-0050>
- Smutradontri, P., & Gadavanij, S. (2020). Fandom and identity construction: An analysis of Thai fans' engagement with Twitter. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 7, 177. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-020-00653-1>
- Taylor, L. D. (2015). Investigating fans of fictional texts: Fan identity salience, empathy, and transportation. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 4(3), 172-187. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000028>
- Thorne, S., & Bruner, G. C. (2006). An exploratory investigation of the characteristics of consumer fanaticism. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 9(1), 51–72. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13522750610640558>
- Thornton, S. (1995) *Club cultures: Music, media, and subcultural capital*. Polity.
- TribunNews. (2021). BTS ARMY Indonesia lawan stigma negatif fandom K-Pop dengan kampanye kesehatan mental. <https://www.tribunnews.com/parapuan/2021/07/02/bts-army-indonesia-lawan-stigma-negatif-fandom-K-Pop-dengan-kampanye-kesehatan-mental>
- Vinney, C., Dill-Shackleford, K. E., Plante, C. N., & Bartsch, A. (2019). Development and validation of a measure of popular media fan identity and its relationship to well-being. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 8(3), 296–307. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000188>
- Wang, J., Braunstein-Minkove, J., Baker, T., Li, B., & Zhang, J. (2020). Self-branding through NFL team fanship: Fans' desired self-image and its implications for branding practices. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 29(1), 47–61. <https://doi.org/10.32731/smq.291.032020.04>
- Williams, J. P., & Ho, S. X. X. (2015). "Sasaengpaen" or K-Pop fan? Singapore youths, authentic identities, and Asian media fandom. *Deviant Behavior*, 37(1), 81–94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2014.983011>

Zakiyah Z, A. (2022). Fenomena pergesaran nilai-nilai religius mahasiswa PAI UIN Malang akibat Korean Wave (K-Pop dan K-Drama). *Muta'allim: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 1(1), 18-41. <https://doi.org/10.18860/mjpai.v1i1.1082>