Journal of Media, Culture and Communication
ISSN: 2799-1245
Vol: 04, No. 02, Feb-Mar 2024
http://journal.hmjournals.com/index.php/JMCC
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55529/jmcc.42.1.7

Analysis of Interpersonal Communication Patterns in K-POP Fans' Parasocial Interactions

Yolla Castro Gucci[1], K. Y.S. Putri[2], Vera Wijayanti Sutjipto[3*]

[1,2,3]Department of Communication Studies, Jakarta State University, Indonesia.*

Email: [1]yolla.cstr@gmail.com, [2]kinkinsubarsa@unj.ac.id
Corresponding Email: [3]yolla.cstr@gmail.com*

Received: 26 October 2023 **Accepted:** 13 January 2024 **Published:** 27 February 2024

Abstract: ***Uploaded social media contents from idols to fans on a continuous state can create a sense of closeness for fans. The upload usually contains the idol's daily activities. The language communicated on idol social media uploads uses language similar to interpersonal communication. This is what increases parasocial relationships with fans. This study aims to find out how emotional involvement is established in parasocial relationships carried out by K-Pop Enthusiasts on X. This research uses a qualitative approach and descriptive research. The results of this study show fans who are members of K-Pop fans constantly interact with their idols through social media, especially X. Fans also have high self-disclosure as K-Popers and high expressions of love for their idols. In addition, fans have a high sense of dependency to stay connected with things related to their idol.***

Keywords: Fan, Interpersonal Communication, K-POP, Parasocial Relationship.

1. INTRODUCTION

In our daily lives, as social beings, we are inseparable from the process of communication with others as an effort to live, develop, and play a role as human beings. Without communication, we and others cannot interact, exchange ideas, thoughts, or feelings. Additionally, with the advancements in information technology, the internet, and the convergence of media, there is increasing support for broad interactions in cross-cultural communication. This phenomenon marks the onset of the globalization era, where there are no limitations for a particular culture or information to reach the message recipient. The term "cultural globalization" refers to the transmission of ideas, meanings, and values worldwide in a manner that expands and intensifies social relationships. The influx of various forms of foreign cultures into Indonesia is rapidly evolving, evident in lifestyle changes, modes of dressing, behavior, and speech patterns that are adopted as trends related to cultural models and formats.

Copyright The Author(s) 2024. This is an Open Access Article distributed under the CC BY license. (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Journal of Media, Culture and Communication
ISSN: 2799-1245
Vol: 04, No. 02, Feb-Mar 2024
http://journal.hmjournals.com/index.php/JMCC
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55529/jmcc.42.1.7

Its tangible influence is particularly noticeable in large cities, where the majority has been exposed to Western, Korean, Japanese, and even Arab influences. For instance, the Hallyu wave or Korean wave phenomenon has assimilated among the younger generation. Essentially, this term represents the Korean fever disseminated globally through Korean Pop Culture using mass media, predominantly through the internet and television networks. It can be said that Korean Pop Culture has now dominated the entertainment industry market in Asia, making it known worldwide. This is evident from the proliferation of fan communities that consist of enthusiasts of their favorite artists. Most of them associate themselves as part of a fandom after developing a deep interest in their idols. Subsequently, they engage in various activities under this label as a form of support or a means of satisfying their consumption needs for that culture.

The presence of social media significantly supports fan activities, transcending distance and time constraints. For instance, X is widely used by Korean artists to facilitate interaction with their fans. They often upload self-portraits or videos, whether related to their celebrity life or personal activities, accompanied by a few words to keep fans connected to their daily lives. The comment section serves as a space for fans to express their thoughts, creating a sense of closeness. Apart from fostering intimacy, the intensity of interaction makes fans feel as if they truly know their idols, being aware of their habits, current activities, sources of inspiration, and what is considered important by these idols.

The intimacy felt because idols intensely share their thoughts and personal feelings with fans is what is referred to as parasocial relationships. Fans can feel emotionally close to their idols by dedicating a significant amount of time to watching, reading, and consuming content related to their idols.

2. RELATED WORK

A number of studies have directly examined parasocial interactions, a phenomenon that emphasizes the relationships that individuals build with public figures or media characters, in the context of communication studies. Within the framework of this research, the main focus is on the way parasocial interactions influence individuals' perceptions, emotions and behavior towards the figures or characters they witness through the media. The findings from these studies provide a deep understanding of the complex dynamics involved in parasocial interactions, as well as their implications in modern culture and communication.

In a previous study by Sagita & Kadewandana (2017) entitled "Parasocial Interaction on Social Media", it was revealed that the emotional relationships formed between K-Pop fans through social media are not just simple connections. They found that fans not only interact regularly with their idols on social media platforms, but also share personal information with each other, feel dependent on each other, and experience deep levels of emotional involvement. The concept of intimacy applied in this study, which involves aspects such as repeated interactions, high levels of self-disclosure, interdependence, and emotional involvement, provides a foundation for understanding the complex dynamics of parasocial

Copyright The Author(s) 2024. This is an Open Access Article distributed under the CC BY license. (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Journal of Media, Culture and Communication
ISSN: 2799-1245
Vol: 04, No. 02, Feb-Mar 2024
http://journal.hmjournals.com/index.php/JMCC
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55529/jmcc.42.1.7

relationships among K-Pop fans. This research expands understanding of how parasocial interactions play a role in building close relationships between fans and media figures, especially in the context of a dynamic entertainment industry such as K-Pop.
Other research conducted by Kim & Song (2016) entitled "Celebrity's self-disclosure on Twitter and parasocial relationships: A mediating role of social presence" found that factors such as professional self-disclosure and personal self-disclosure of celebrities play a key role in shaping parasocial interactions with fans. They found that the higher the level of self-disclosure, both in professional and personal contexts, the more positive fans' perceptions of the celebrity. In addition, this research also highlights the role of fans' retweet behavior in strengthening the relationship between celebrities and fans, which in turn increases fans' feelings of social presence. This shows that fans' active involvement in interacting with content posted by celebrities is also an important factor in building and strengthening parasocial relationships. This research highlights the complexity of the dynamics of interaction between celebrities and fans via social media, as well as its relevance in understanding how parasocial relationships form and develop in today's digital era.

On the other hand, research by Yan & Yang (2020) entitled "From parasocial to parakin: Co-creating idols on social media" found that the relationship between fans and idols has changed. Previously, these relationships were known as parasocial, where fans only admired their idols from afar. However, in the age of social media, this relationship has developed into what is known as a "parakin". This means that fans not only admire their idols, but also play an active role in shaping their idols' public image, careers, and even personal lives. In this study, the researchers used text analysis and in-depth interviews to understand more about how this parakin relationship occurs. They found that fans have dual motivations in forming these kinds of relationships. First, they want to feel closer to their idols, to feel like they know them personally. Second, they also want to influence their idols, both in their careers and personal lives. These findings reveal a new dimension of fan-idol interactions in the social media era, which is important to consider in understanding the current phenomenon of star worship.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach that emphasizes elaboration on information obtained from respondents to comprehend their behavior and communication patterns, subsequently elucidating the specific social phenomena under investigation. In essence, qualitative research examines a perspective to understand social phenomena from the participants' viewpoint (Sugiyono, 2005). According to Hidayat (2010), descriptive research is a broader research method in the utilization of its data. The acquired data are then analyzed to discern the underlying factors that prompted the informants to provide such descriptions (Usman & Akbar, 2008).

In collecting data, researchers used an online survey with open questions which was distributed on Twitter to K-pop fans. The data collected includes basic information such as name and age, as well as fans' opinions on certain topics. In addition, this survey also

Copyright The Author(s) 2024. This is an Open Access Article distributed under the CC BY license. (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Journal of Media, Culture and Communication
ISSN: 2799-1245
Vol: 04, No. 02, Feb-Mar 2024
http://journal.hmjournals.com/index.php/JMCC
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55529/jmcc.42.1.7

included a statement to determine the level of fan dependence on their idols, where respondents were asked to rate their dependence on a scale of 1 to 10. In this way, the research not only got fans' opinions, but also tried to measure how their influence and dependence on their idols on a measurable scale.

4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Informant Profile and Activities

a. Fira (24)

Fira is one among many individuals who have a fondness for the music group DAY6. Through her X account, she regularly tweets, likes, and retweets content related to her favorite band. Her dependency on these activities falls within the high category, with a value of 7. According to her admission, if she doesn't open X even for a day, she feels uneasy, experiencing anxiety about missing information, although there are times when she feels bored. The factor contributing to her sense of closeness to her idols is acknowledged to be the resonance between the words expressed or the lyrics of their songs and the circumstances of her own life. The talent, performances, and positive qualities of all five members also support her interest in DAY6.

b. Rahma (20)

ATEEZ is a boy group that is admired by Rahma. The activities she commonly engages in on X include sharing her daily life, fangirling with fellow fans, getting to know new people to make friends, storytelling, and retweeting ATEEZ-related content. With a given rating of 9, Rahma acknowledges that, in addition to staying up to date with her idols' activities, she feels joy every time she interacts with friends who share the same passion. The warm treatment she receives also makes her feel like she has many friends. ATEEZ frequently shares their activities through tweets accompanied by photos and expressions of affection, fostering a sense of closeness with the idol. Her interest is sparked by their music, unique talents, and conceptual approach throughout their career. Additionally, the members' personalities and sincerity in appreciating fans contribute positively to Rahma's overall impression.

c. Alillah (22)

Alillah's favorite boy group is Stray Kids. As a fan who predominantly engages in social media activities on X, she is accustomed to hyping content related to her idols, interacting with fellow fans, supporting Stray Kids through promotional efforts such as voting and streaming, and even collecting memes/photos/videos featuring the idol group. However, despite these activities, her level of dependence does not appear overly pronounced, as indicated by the rating of 5 she assigned. This is attributed to Stray Kids currently being on a break, leaving her feeling a bit disconnected from her friends. The leader of Stray Kids, Bang Chan, regularly conducts live sessions once a month, fostering a sense of closeness by sharing personal stories, providing encouragement and motivation, and even sharing playlists with fans, all of which contribute to the respondent's perceived closeness.

Copyright The Author(s) 2024. This is an Open Access Article distributed under the CC BY license. (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Journal of Media, Culture and Communication
ISSN: 2799-1245
Vol: 04, No. 02, Feb-Mar 2024
http://journal.hmjournals.com/index.php/JMCC
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55529/jmcc.42.1.7

Her interest in Stray Kids is acknowledged to be rooted in the group's talent for producing their own music and lyrics that resonate with young people. Additionally, the members' appealing personalities and visuals serve as additional positive factors.

Interpersonal Communication Patterns

In parasocial relationships, when fans perceive their idols as close, akin to friends, the closeness experienced can resemble interpersonal relationships for the fans. The interpersonal closeness built in this context is unilateral, occurring only on the part of the fan. Emotional involvement is evident in the parasocial relationships observed among K-Pop fans. The four factors contributing to this emotional involvement are repeated interaction, high self-disclosure, high interdependence, and high emotional involvement.

K-Pop enthusiasts, known as K-Popers, engage in fan activities on social media and form communities known as fanbases. Fan activities encompass fans as recipients and seekers of information, fans as sources of information, virtual identities, interactions with idols, interactions among fans, fan projects, fan art, and fan edits.

Regarding emotional involvement factors, such as repeated interaction, fans often seek information related to their idols by continuously checking their idols' social media. This interaction is part of the parasocial relationship maintained by fans. As Cohen (2014:144) states, continuous parasocial interaction leads to parasocial relationships where the audience takes further action and has a strong desire to learn more about the media persona and the possibility of meeting the media persona.

Fans also frequently make posts on their personal social media dedicated to their idols. These posts are not a one-time occurrence but are repeated several times. The language used in these posts typically mirrors casual conversations with close friends. As explained by Weaver (1993:37), repeated interactions are related to intensity and frequency, making the communication in the relationship feel more individualized.

Fans exhibit high self-disclosure as K-Popers, sharing personal information with friends and family. Additionally, fans do not conceal their affection for their idols. They express their liking through personal social media, tagging their idols in these posts. The content of these posts predominantly expresses their affection for their idols, in line with Weaver's (1993:37) observation of a high level of freedom in expressing all information related to oneself. Fans openly declare their identity as a member of a specific fandom and express their deep liking directly to the idol through personal social media posts.

Fans also display high interdependence, constantly seeking connection with their idols. This high interdependence occurs when fans cannot stop thinking about or searching for information about their idols or engaging in any activity related to them. Fans activate notifications from their idols' social media, ensuring they are informed whenever their idols make tweets. On average, idols send one to six tweets per day, prompting fans to check at

Copyright The Author(s) 2024. This is an Open Access Article distributed under the CC BY license. (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Journal of Media, Culture and Communication
ISSN: 2799-1245
Vol: 04, No. 02, Feb-Mar 2024
http://journal.hmjournals.com/index.php/JMCC
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55529/jmcc.42.1.7

least once a day. Fans may try to resist checking information about their idols, but they inevitably return to engage in idol fandom activities.

The same pattern applies to the informants in this study. On social media, they admit to constantly searching for content related to their idols, making it practically impossible to stay away from their idols' social media for a whole day.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Fans who are part of the K-Pop fandom consistently engage in interactions with their idols through social media, particularly on X. Fans also exhibit high self-disclosure as K-Popers and express a strong liking towards their idols, resulting in a high dependency to stay connected with aspects related to their idols.

The use of language resembling interpersonal communication is evident in interactions conducted through social media, where fans frequently express their feelings towards their idols, whom they perceive as close and familiar figures. In this context, the responses given by the idols can significantly influence the sense of closeness that arises from the fan's perspective. Additionally, the attitudes and expressions of affection displayed by the idols contribute to the emotional connection that fans establish with their idols. Regardless of face-to-face encounters, fans consider the interactions occurring in this virtual space sufficient for building a sense of closeness between themselves and their idols.

6. REFERENCES

1. Agosto, D.E., & Abbas, J. (2011). Teens, Libraries, and Social Networking: What Librarians Need to Know. California: ABC-CLIO.
2. Ainslie, M.J., Lipura, S.D., & Lim, J.B.Y. (2017). Understanding The Hallyu Backlash in Southeast Asia: A Case Study of Consumers in Thailand, Malaysia, and Philippines. Journal of Kritika Kultura, 28(1): 63-91.
3. Cohen, J. (2014). "Mediated Relationship and Social Life: Current Research on Fandom, Parasocial Relationships, and Identification." In Oliver, M.B. & Raney, A.A. (2014). Media and Social Life (1st Edition). New York: Routledge.
4. Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches. Sage publications.
5. Dults, L., Zwaan, K., & Reijinders, S. (2016). The Ashgate Research Companion to Fan Culture. London: Routledge.
6. Fauziah, R. (2015). Fandom K-Pop Idol dan Media Sosial (Studi Deskriptif Kualitatif tentang Penggunaan Media Sosial Twitter pada Hottest Indonesia sebagai Followers Fanbase@ taeckhunID,@ 2PMindohottest dan Idol Account@ Khunnie0624).
7. Giles, D. (2003). The Psychology of the Media Audience. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbum Publisher.
8. Gray, J., Harrington, C.L. & Sandvoss, C. (2007). Fandom: Identities and Communities in a Mediated World. New York: NYU Press.

Copyright The Author(s) 2024. This is an Open Access Article distributed under the CC BY license. (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Journal of Media, Culture and Communication
ISSN: 2799-1245
Vol: 04, No. 02, Feb-Mar 2024
http://journal.hmjournals.com/index.php/JMCC
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55529/jmcc.42.1.7

9. Hartmann, T., & Goldhoorn, C. (2011). Horton and Wohl Revisited: Exploring Viewers' Experience of Parasocial Interaction. Journal of Communication, (61):1104-21.
10. Hidayanti, R., & Martunis, Y. (2017). Peran Media Baru dalam Membentuk Komunitas Virtual (Studi pada Mahasiswa yang Bergabung dalam Komunitas Acehvidgram di Instagram). Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa FISIP Unsyiah, Vol. 2(2): 47- 66.
11. Jenkins, H. (2007). The Wow Climax: Tracing the Emotional Impact of Popular Culture. New York: New York University Press.
12. Kellner, D. (2010). Budaya Media: Cultural Studies, Identitas, dan Politik Antara Modern dan Postmodern. Yogyakarta: Jalasutra.
13. Kim, J., & Song, H. (2016). Celebrity's self-disclosure on Twitter and parasocial relationships: A mediating role of social presence. Computers in Human Behavior, 62, 570-577.
14. Larsen, K., & Zubernis, L. (2011). Fandom At The Crossroads: Celebration, Shame and Fan/ Producer Relationships. London: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
15. Nabi, R.L., & Oliver, M.B. (2009). The SAGE Handbook of Media Processes and Effects. California: SAGE Publications.
16. Oliver, M.B., & Raney, A. A. (2014). Media and Social Life. New York: Routledge.
17. Pyne, E.A. (2010). The Ultimate Guide to the Harry Potter Fandom. Florida: What The Flux Comics Publish.
18. Prasetya, A.B. (2016). Trend Media Sosial di Kalangan Remaja dalam Perspektif Budaya Populer.
19. Redhead, S. (1997). Post-Fandom and the Millennial Blues: The Transformation of Soccer Culture. London: Routledge.
20. Sagita, A., & Kadewandana, D. (2017). Hubungan parasosial di media sosial: Studi pada fandom army di twitter. CoverAge: Journal of Strategic Communication, 8(1), 45-58.
21. Sandvoss, C. (2005). Fans: The Mirror of Consumption. Cambridge: Polity Press.
22. Weaver, R. L. (1993). Understanding Interpersonal Communication. 6th. Edition. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.
23. Yan, Q., & Yang, F. (2021). From parasocial to parakin: Co-creating idols on social media. New Media & Society, 23(9), 2593-2615.

Copyright The Author(s) 2024. This is an Open Access Article distributed under the CC BY license. (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)