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Participatory Fandom of Army BTS Indonesia in the Digital Comic on Webtoon Apps

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ABSTRACT

The development of technology, communication and information facilitates cultural exchange in individuals and groups. One form of the phenomenon of cultural exchange is K-Pop. K-Pop has given rise to presence of idol, fans and fandom. Uses and gratification theory shows that individuals actively use the media to fulfill their goals as fans with a form of participatory fandom. In economy context, idols are used as a media consumer attraction. Idol cooperation with a media, attracted fans to participate with the media. With the presence of digital media, fans do online participatory fandom activities, such as digital comics. The features of digital comics are used by fans as a medium for participatory fandom. By making fans of BTS (ARMY BTS Indonesia) in LINE Webtoon, this research was conducted to look at patterns of fan participation with different categories in utilizing digital comic applications as fandom media. Research used constructivism paradigm through a qualitative digital ethnographic approach. Semi-structured interviews were carried out on five informants who were ARMY BTS Indonesia as readers of "Save Me" webtoon and digital observations in LINE Webtoon. The results show that there are two characteristics of fans, namely temporary fan and devoted fan. Other results show that devoted fans take advantage of the features in LINE Webtoon more optimally as a form of dedication to their idols, while temporary fans have other phenomena besides idols to do participatory fandom activities.

Keywords

Idol, fans, fandom, digital comic, Webtoon

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INTRODUCTION

The development of technology, communication, and information (ICT) has become one of the factors in the emergence of globalization which artificially removes boundaries between countries and facilitates

cultural exchange. The internet has become one of the tools used by the public to access various information from various countries. The internet is a technology that has broad broadcast capabilities throughout the world, which is a vehicle for collaboration between individual interactions with computers without experiencing geographical interference (Leiner, et al., 2009).

In May 2019, the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) showed

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the results that the level of internet penetration in the Indonesian population increased to 64.8 percent, or as many as 171.17 million people of Indonesia were connected to the internet connection (Pratomo, 2019). One phenomenon of cultural exchange that is developing rapidly with the help of the presence of the internet is Hallyu.

Hallyu is a Korean culture wave, a term used to describe the popularity of Korean entertainment and culture throughout Asia and other parts of the world that began to emerge in the 1990s (Korea.net, 2019). One of the products spread by Korea through hallyu is music known as K-Pop.

K-Pop (Korean pop music) is a genre of music that developed in the 21st century by covering dance-pop, pop ballads, techno, rock, hip-hop, R&B, and so on (Korea.net, 2019). K-Pop was originally just a genre of music that turned into a subculture among teenagers and young adults in the East and Southeast Asia region. At present, K-Pop is not only enjoyed by the people of Asia but has extended to the Americas and Europe. The characteristics of K-Pop itself are colored by the presence of boy bands and girl bands that dance and sing.

Other phenomena that occur together with the presence of K-Pop are idols, fans and fandoms. Idols or celebrities are individuals who have popularity and fame that makes them known by the general public, especially as in the entertainment and sports fields (Ang and Chan, 2016). Fans (fans) are individuals who have an obsession with an object, such as an artist (Dean, 2017). Fandom is a world for individuals who claim to be fans of an entertainment or artist (Hagen, 2010).

The emergence of various media, including digital over the past few centuries, gave the idol fame an ever-growing industry. Fans try to increase their involvement with people and activities related to their focus of interest. More actively, fans engage in activities related to fandom and seek interaction with each other with group members in it, both

online and offline, this is referred to as participatory fandom (Jenkins, 1992 in Fleming, 2007).

Since 2016 up to now there is one K-Pop boy band that is on the rise and is famous, and has become an idol in various countries including Indonesia, namely BTS. BTS (Bangtan Sonyeong or Bangtan Boys or Behind The Scene) is one of the boy bands formed under the auspices of the Big Hit Entertainment in 2013 with seven members, namely RM, Jin, Suga, J-Hope, Jimin, V, and Jungkook (BBC, 2018). BTS is famous for its music that shows how to love oneself and raises many issues related to intimidation, elitism and mental health.

The success of BTS is also supported by the large number of fans it has. Two social media shows the size of the ARMY BTS (BTS fan name), 16.5 million followers on Twitter and 13.5 million on Instagram (BBC, 2018). Loyalty and dedication of ARMY BTS can deliver BTS to the Billboard award in America with 300 million votes online; various music videos that have more than hundreds of millions of viewers; as well as many pages, profiles and sites established around the world created by fans to post content, send messages, and show love to their idols.

In addition to providing easy opportunities in cultural exchange, the internet has also changed some human habits to become dependent on things present in digital form, for example, in the reading industry. Read is the process of creating meaning that combines the reader's knowledge, reading context, and information from the text (Peter, Weber, and Roeber, 1987 in Gilakjani, Sabouri, and Banou, 2016). At first we could find the conventional reading industry in printed form but with the development of technology, some reading products can be enjoyed in the hands of mobile phones.

One of the reading industry products that has undergone a change to digital form, is comics. Comics are a story that is conveyed through a series of images that are side by side

(Aggleton, 2018). Digital comics are images arranged together with each other present in the form of multimedia to explain a story that might make up moving images and audio enhancements (Dittmar, 2012). One form of digital comics is webtoon.

Webtoon is a term for a form of South Korean digital comics called manhwa, which is read vertically from top to bottom, and is accessed free of charge through a website (Jang and Song, 2017). Webtoon is considered to be part of the hallyu form, being able to be a popular application used in conveying Korean cultural and entertainment content (Jang and Song, 2017 in Bhaskara, 2019). One of the popular forms of webtoon is LINE Webtoon.

LINE Webtoon is a digital comic application issued by Naver Corporation in collaboration with LINE Corporation to target the digital comics market in 2014 (Bhaskara, 2019). LINE Webtoon has 35 million active users worldwide, and 6 million active users in Indonesia (Agnes, 2016). Having large users globally, in 2017 LINE Webtoon managed to get a profit of 7.07 million US dollars and is expected to continue to rise to 8.4 million US dollars in the future (Bhaskara, 2019).

In 2019, LINE Webtoon collaborated with Big Hit Entertainment and LICO illustrators in creating a webtoon series that tells the theories behind the BTS album storyline, titled "Save Me". Having fifteen episodes and one prologue, the "Save Me" webtoon series received a fairly high rating of 9.89. ARMY BTS's enthusiasm with the presence of this webtoon series was very high, for example like on Instagram with the hashtag #SaveMeBTS which reached more than 20 thousand publications. In addition, many ARMY BTS forums show that fans cannot stop themselves from continuing the story of the "Save Me" webtoon series and decide to buy coins (GDMultiFandom, 2019).

The above description makes researchers interested in analyzing the patterns of participation of fans with different categories in

a fandom by utilizing digital comic applications as a medium of interaction. In more detail the purpose of this study was to look at group characteristics from various fans; know the form of participation in fandom; the purpose of using a digital comic application as a fan; and other forms of interaction that fans do in a fandom.

The benefits in this study are divided into two, namely: (1) theoretically, this study provides an overview of the pattern of participatory fandom that utilizes the presence of mass media to meet their satisfaction and needs as a fan, (2) practically, the presence of fans and fandoms as the backbone of an idol gives a new form of business to the development of the media.

METHOD

This study uses a constructivist paradigm with a qualitative approach to digital ethnography. Constructivism is a paradigm in research that discusses the perspective of reality that is subjective, because it is built from individual experience or socially shaped (Kawulich, 2012). The constructivism paradigm in this study was used to describe the reality of life as a fan of K-Pop idols who participated in a fandom seen in a digital comic application, namely LINE Webtoon.

Qualitative research is an approach in research used in exploring a problem and developed with a detailed understanding (Creswell, 2012). Digital ethnographic research strategies are a form of approach to research with ethnographic techniques conducted in the digital world (Pink, et al., 2016). Ethnography itself is a type of qualitative research, where patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language in a group that exchange and share cultures are described, analyzed, and interpreted (Creswell, 2012). The presence of digital media is a consequence that must be explored in research with digital ethnographic manganoan (Pink, et al., 2016). This study uses a qualitative approach to digital ethnography to see how the patterns of

fan participation in a subculture community occur in digital comics (LINE Webtoon).

There are two forms of data collection techniques used in this study, namely primary data collection and secondary data. Primary data is data that is done and obtained by the researcher himself using the techniques and ideas he has (Creswell, 2012).

In this study there are two types of primary data used, namely semi-structured interviews and online observations. Semi structured interview (semi structured interview) is one of the interview methods in which there is a merging of closed and open questions and it is accompanied by follow-up questions about why and how (Adams, 2015). The semi-structured interview function is as a guide for researchers in getting direct information from informants about the form of their participation as a fan in a fandom that is active in digital comic applications. Online observation is a method in digital ethnographic approach that allows researchers to conduct online observations in seeing the forms of behavior and interactions of informants in the digital world (Talip, Narayan, and Edwards, 2016).

Secondary data are all forms of literature produced by previous studies or other writers that can represent the initial ideas of researchers (Creswell, 2012). Secondary data used in this research is literature study. Literature study is a form of a review of previous studies in a comprehensive manner related to the topic being investigated today (Denney and Tewksbury, 2013). Literature studies are carried out in books, research journals, and publications related to fan activity, fandom, and digital comic applications.

Informants were collected using convenience sampling technique. Convenience sampling can be called haphazard sampling or accidental sampling is one type of non-probability sampling that is used when samples from the target population have met certain practical criteria, such as, geographical

proximity, time availability, or willingness to participate (Wu Suen, Huang, and Lee, 2014).

In this study, the informants were characterized as part of the BTS fandom boy group in Indonesia (ARMY BTS Indonesia), as well as downloading and reading the Webtoon series entitled "Save Me" on LINE Webtoon. The limited time of research is another reason to use this sampling technique. From online observations, five informants were selected who actively appeared in comments in almost every episode of the "Save Me" webtoon.

Interviews were conducted by meeting in person, where in a day the researcher conducted a meeting with one informant. Broadly speaking, the questions given are related to: (1) The process of becoming a fan, (2) The role and impact of fandoms and idols on fans, (3) The main purpose of using a webtoon. (4) Webtoon features used and their purpose, (5) other efforts by fans as a form of participation in fandom. Other, fan information such as age, gender, and length of time being a fan were asked at the end of the interview.

The following is a summary of informant's personal data:

Table 1. Informants

Informant	Age	Sex	Length of being a Fan (Month)
1	24	M	48
2	19	M	15
3	20	M	9
4	24	M	4
5	23	M	24

Source: Primary Data

The form of data analysis technique used in this study is thematic analysis. Thematic analysis (thematic analysis) is one of the general approaches to analyzing qualitative methods that involve identifying themes or patterns in data such as describing cultural aspects that affect the lives of informants (Kawulich and Holland, 2012). The data that researchers have obtained in the field are transcribed, grouped in a category, and compared with results from other

informants to find a pattern that illustrates the form of participation from fans of the fandom in a digital comic application.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Subcultures, K-Pop, Idol, and Fans

Subcultures are minority groups in society by sharing certain values and habits that can be said to be different and even conflicting with other individuals who belong to larger cultural groups (Long and Wall, 2012). Subcultures must be able to show characteristics to make them different from other cultures, which are carried out with an activity, values, use of artifacts, territorial space, and others (Clarke and Jefferson, 1975 in Long and Wall, 2012).

Meanwhile, popular culture is a form of worldview, a form of intellectual practice and work, a spiritual and aesthetic community or group within a certain period, which is enjoyed by many people, comes from the general public (Storey 2009). Besides popular culture is culture as mass produced and has commercial value. The popular meaning here is associated with middle to lower culture to show symbolic protest the culture of capitalism. One form of popular culture today is K-Pop. Korean Popular Music (K-Pop) is a form of popular culture from South Korea that is part of a phenomenon called Korean Wave or Hallyu, and spawned many idols.

Idols are individuals who are admired, not limited to gods, heroes, celebrities, famous figures, or role models, and most cases can also be pop stars, like an artist or athlete (Cheung and Yue, 2012). For the media industry, an idol is capital owned by an entertainment agency which becomes an investment as a promotional tool (Long and Wall, 2012). The media also has a role in helping to create idols and how to use them, as well as making the star system a pure form of media manipulation (Dyer, 1998 in Fleming, 2007). Entering the 21st century, audiences are presented with many idols from

various sources with the media behind it (Fleming, 2007).

On the other hand, fans is a term that comes from Latin, namely *fanaticus* which means panic or madness (Trzci, 2018). The term fans in the modern sense began to be used in the 19th century to describe ball fans and theater goers (Jenkins, 1992 in Trzci, 2018). Fans (fans) are individuals who have an obsession with stars, celebrities, films, TV programs, certain bands; individuals who have a lot of information about their favorite objects by quoting sentences or lyrics, chapters and verses they like (Hills, 2002 in Dean, 2017).

In the economic context, fans are important products in the media and idol industry, namely as a supporting sponsor and become an indicator value of an idol's fame (Laughey, 2010). Fans are valuable, creative and productive things that have a role in media production (Jenkins, 1992 in Laughey, 2010). The interaction is carried out not only with the idol he admires but also with the media itself to express their views on how their idols are presented.

Fandom is a cultural community that has a common mode of acceptance; with critical categories and practices; aesthetic production traditions; and social set and expectations (Jenkins, 1992 in Dean, 2017). Along with the development of digital technology, there is a new term in fandom, digital fandom. Digital fandom (digital fandom) are individuals who use digital technology who are involved in an activity and practice as a group of fans, and are associated with certain cultural texts (Lanier and Fowler, 2014).

Characteristics of Fans

According to Samra and Wos (2015), fans are divided into three groups, namely: (1) Temporary fans, namely individuals interested in an object with a limited time. After the phenomenon of the object ends, the individual no longer has the motivation to show interest in the object. (2) Dedicated fans are individuals

who are loyal to the object that they love. Being a fan has become an important part of his self-identification but has not yet become the most important part of his life. (3) Fanatical fan is an individual who shows loyalty in which there is commitment, devotion, passion, emotional attachment, enthusiasm, and strong involvement in it.

From Table 1, it was found that the informant stated that he was still in the group of temporary fans and dedicated fans and had not yet entered the stage of being a fanatical fan. The informant group who declared themselves to be temporary fans showed that the presence of content presented by the idol (webtoon and BTS theory) became their main attraction to become a fan.

Table 2. Type of Fans

Informant	Temporary	Devoted	Fanatical
1		x	
2		x	
3	x		
4	x		
5		x	

Source: Primary Data

So, I keep on following BTS because I keep releasing animation products, but like the variety shows and music, I choose the one that suits me (Informant-3, Jakarta, 18/05/2019).

I hype when my prologue or teaser that contains the theory comes out. (Informant-4, Jakarta, 19/05/2019).

While the group of informants who declared themselves to be dedicated fans indicated that being a fan was an important activity to do everyday that had become part of their habits and dedication to the idols he admired.

I knew the story of their struggle from the beginning, so I struggled to support them, vote and buy an album to see them happy and win (Informant-1, Jakarta, 15/05/2019).

Interestingly, when researchers investigate more deeply about the possibility of being fanatical fans, every informant shows a negative response. Fans claim that they are different from fans in South Korea who can become *sesaeng* fans (fanatics in Korean terms). They stated that we respect the boundaries between idols and their fans, where manners and culture in Indonesia are the limits. In addition, the responses of those around them when they show themselves as K-Popers are exaggerating, influencing fans to keep their limits.

It feels like a fanatic for ARMY Indonesia is hard huh. I just found BTS already so happy. So for me there are a lot of things that keep me from being overweight, especially not all Indonesian people are familiar with K-Pop and can accept K-Pop (Informant-2, Jakarta, 15/05/2019).

In culture there is a dominant culture or strong culture. Strong culture creates clear values as guidelines for the actions of members in it to suppress differences (Boisnier and Chatman, 2014). The dominant culture exists to maintain stability, but still provides room for a subculture to develop and be interagated in it. In this case fans (K-Popers or ARMY BTS) are subcultures within community and the dominant culture becomes rules that help limit their acting.

Environmental Participatory fandom in LINE Webtoon

Participatory fandom is a condition where fans are constantly changing towards active action on their hobbies and have a greater impact on the mass media and society (Jefkins, 1992, in Fleming, 2007). Some fans are involved in participatory fandom because they are

personally attracted to the idol through identification with other people who have the same passion or make the idol a model in their lives (Fleming 2007).

Fans want social interaction and membership in a fandom (Fleming, 2007). Fans expect positive aspects of participatory fandom, such as empowerment or social rewards (Fleming, 2007). Membership in a fandom also allows them to talk with fellow fans about a subject they might not discuss with other group members where they are (such as family and coworkers). Basil (1996 in Fleming, 2007) concluded that the stronger the similarity felt, the greater the possibility of identification. In addition, the greater the identification, the more likely the modeling of the idol's behavior or attitudes. In this case, modeling behavior (such as buying an authorized product) can be a participatory form of fandom.

This paper reviews the terms comics and digital comics as a basis for concepts. Comics are images that coexist with other images, which are deliberately ordered to provide information and obtain aesthetic feedback from readers (Cohn, 2005). Comics were originally found in the Cro-Magnon cave in the form of paintings and hieroglyphics in Ancient Egypt which is a form of graphic fable as a medium for conveying thoughts and ideas (Tychinski, 2004 in Lim, 2012). Modern comics were then introduced by Rodolphe Topffer, a cartoonist in Switzerland in 1829 (McCloud, 1993 in Lim, 2012).

Not only popular in the West, comics in the East were originally present in East Asian countries, such as China, Japan, and Korea (Kim, 2006 in Lim, 2012). In Korea, both cetal and online comics are known as manhwa. Manhwa consists of 23 categories which were introduced since 1965 as a form of Japanese cultural influence on Korea (Koh, 2012). But the beginning of illegal online publishing of comics since 1990 and the economic crisis that hit Korea in 1997, weakened the comic industry at that time (Lee, Choi, and Kim, 2015).

As a country with the fastest development of internet technology, South Korea has become one of the pioneers of digital comics. Digital comics are comics published in the digital world, which consist of single images or are arranged in several sections; read with an

aligned path; has a frame around it; there are word balloons; and visual meaning is illustrated by the writing style used (Aggleton, 2018). A form of digital comic that is famous in South Korea, is called a webtoon.

Webtoon is a web form of manhwa because it is presented in a new format that is supported by digital technology, utilizes the internet network, and is accessed on a website through mobile phones and other internet devices (Jin, 2015 in Jang and Song, 2017). Webtoon has changed into three generations. In the latest generation, the webtoon utilizes Liquid Crystal Display (LCD) technology, which changes the way of reading comics to vertical from top to bottom, and image quality is very influential which requires high pixels (Norin, 2018).

Meanwhile, fans actively utilize the media they choose to show their participation in a fandom to achieve their goals (Jenkins, 1992 in Fleming, 2007). LINE Webtoon has various features that provide space for users to interact and give appreciation to the webtoonist (creator or creator of the webtoon), such as episode previews, comments, sharing, love, subscribe, and rate. The results of interviews with the five informants plus online observations show the activities of fans with these features, as illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3. Features used

Feature	Informant				
	Devoted		Temporary		
	1	2	5	3	4
<i>Preview Episode</i>	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Comment</i>	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Sharing</i>	x	x	x	-	-
<i>Love</i>	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Subscribe</i>	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Rate</i>	x	x	x	x	x

Sourcer: Primary Data

Episode Preview

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LINE Webtoon is a digital comic application that presents free content that is published continuously every week and can be accessed via the web or mobile, either having an iOS or Android system (Webtoon.com, 2019). LINE Webtoon was developed by Kim Junkoo in 2014 which was first published by Naver Corporation, one of the largest digital companies in South Korea (Acuna, 2016). To target the global market, Naver Corporation collaborated with LINE Corporation in 2014, with thirteen categories of stories in it, namely drama, fantasy, comedy, action, slice of life, romance, superhero, heartwarming, historical, thriller, sports, sci-fi, horror, and informative (Bhaskara, 2019).

In the current webtoon form there are several features that allow readers to do more things than when reading conventional comics (Webtoon.com, 2019), namely: (1) *Episode Preview*, a feature provided for readers to see the continuation of the existing webtoon series by buying the content through the LINE Coin feature. (2) *Comment* is a feature that available at the end of each episode, so that readers can provide input or response to content.

This comment will get another response from other readers. (3) *Sharing*, which is a feature that gives readers the opportunity to be able to share links from content to other applications, such as social media. (4) *Love*, a feature used by readers to be able to mark episodes they like. This love rating is also one of the indicators of the favorite webtoon series evaluation. (5) *Subscribe*, a feature provided so that readers get notifications when there are episodes of the newly published webtoon series. (6) *Rate*, a feature provided to rate webtoon series with one to five-star ratings. The episode preview feature is provided for readers to see the continuation of the existing webtoon series by purchasing the content through the LINE Coin feature (Webtoon.com, 2019).

The interview results show that the five informants were willing to spend money to buy coins to enjoy the episode preview feature. Informants 1, 2 and 5 who classify themselves as

dedicated fans, claimed to consistently buy coins because of their responsibilities as fans. While informants 3 and 4 as temporary fans indicated that they only bought coins when the beginning of the webtoon series was launched to answer the curiosity of the existing storyline. The uniqueness that occurs appears on the temporary fan where after they realize they have read the next episode by buying money, they feel sorry for the action.

I think this is my responsibility as a fan. They have struggled to make a good story, so if I can give maximum feedback. Well even though I have to lose money, but bangtan (BTS) gets a profit (Informant-5, Jakarta, 20/05/2019).

I only bought coins at the very beginning between episodes 2 to 4. I was so curious about the theory that fans have been looking for, just like the theory on the Big Hit webtoon. I haven't bought any more lately, the problem is that I'm not interested enough in the story (Informant-4, Jakarta, 19/05/2019).

Comment

This feature provides an opportunity for readers to express opinions for the author or interact with other readers (Webtoon.com, 2019). Comments become the most used feature by fans because they can show expression as a fan and interact with other fans. Differences are also seen from the different fan category groups on the use of this comment feature. For the temporary fan group, the function of the comment feature is to rate the published content. As for dedicated fans, the comments column is used to look for interactions with other fans.

Sharing

Sharing feature is a feature provided so that content can be distributed to other social media platforms (Webtoon.com 2019). Very clearly different things are seen in the use of sharing features. For dedicated fans, distributing

publications related to the "Save Me" webtoon series is a must, in order to attract interaction with other fans in different media. Meanwhile, according to the temporary fan, this need not be done. The activity simply shows appreciation for meaning through input and assessment.

If it seems like the sharing act, it's not like that. For me it is too public to show that I am an ARMY. Because what I saw was the quality of the webtoon compared to me, I had to spit it out everywhere (Informant-4, Jakarta, 19/05/2019).

Love

The love feature is the part that is used by readers to mark their favorite content as well as being an indicator of rating content (Webtoon.com, 2019). For temporary fans, giving love is only done if the content has provided satisfaction for him, such as good pictures and interesting stories. As for dedicated fans, the activity of giving love is done consistently to support their idols.

If for me, love is a form of appreciation for the work of the webtoonist (Informant-3, Jakarta, 18/05/2019).

As long as it is BTS-related content and good for their image, whether I'm interested or not, I will definitely love it (Informant-1, Jakarta, 15/05/2019).

Subscribe

Subscribe feature is presented as a marker for readers of the webtoon schedule they read (Webtoon.com, 2019). Both the dedicated fan and the temporary fan admit to subscribing the "Save Me" webtoon series so as not to miss the updates.

Rate

The rate feature is a purchase of one to five-star ratings which will indicate the webtoon rating in the application (Webtoon.com, 2019). Just like

the use of the love, feature rate for temporary fans is part of the assessment of fan satisfaction with the content presented. While dedicated fanrate is a feature used to support idols.

The theory of the use and fulfillment of satisfaction shows that audiences actively choose the media to meet their needs and reject it when it is not needed, and give value to the content of the media it uses (Katz, Blumer and Gurevitch in West and Turner, 2010). Differences in fans in several categories influence the perspective of the needs and the fulfillment of decisions from the content provided by the media. This shows that there are external factors that have an impact on individual craze levels, such as loyalty and involvement.

According to Samra and Wos (2015) there are three categories of grouping of fans, namely temporary fan, dedicated fan, and fanatic fan. However, the results of the study showed that Indonesian ARMY BTS fans were only included in the group of temporary fans and dedicated fans. This is due to the limited interaction and the phenomenon that is raised by the idol encourages fans to better appreciate the relationship. In addition, the presence of dominant culture is still a limit for subcultures in acting.

Fleming (2007) states that the theory of the use and fulfillment of satisfaction illustrates that the public is actively utilizing and gaining satisfaction from the media, but it is fully gaining influence and control from the media itself.

Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) is a theory put forward by Elihu Katz in 1974 (Griffin, 2012). UGT tries to explain that everyone has different reasons for consuming media messages and the effect of received media messages is not always the same for everyone (Kania and Agatha, 2011). According to Katz, Blumer and Gurevitch explained the basic assumptions of the UGT (West and Turner, 2010), namely: (1) the public actively chooses the media to meet their needs and rejects when it is not needed, (2) audiences have the initiative

in connecting between satisfaction with the need for media choice, (3) there is competition between the media in meeting the needs satisfaction, (4) individuals have awareness in using media, interests, and motives that can give an idea of the use of media. (5) The audience can give value to the content of the media it uses.

Fans who participate in a fandom not only utilize what they see and read, but also find ways to better involve themselves with the media they use, including modifying it to fit the goals they want to achieve (Jefkins, 1992 in Fleming, 2007). This can be seen from the perception of fans with different characteristics looking at the use and how to get satisfaction from the features provided by LINE Webtoon. However, users have been directed to only be able to use the features that are available, buy coins and others with the influence and control of the media.

CONCLUSION

Participatory fandom studies are important research because fans are media users and part of consumers. The more active fans are involved in fandom (both activities are carried out offline and online), the more they encourage celebrity phenomena and help influence the media. Another implication of this research can be used practically for digital comic companies where the presence of fans provides new business opportunities. Fans through fandom anticipation will actively show their love for their idols in whatever ways are provided by the media.

In this study, it still has research limitations, such as: (1) Short research time, where interviews are only conducted once a week and once with the informants so that they have not received maximum information. (2) Random selection of informants due to time constraints, thus finding informants who have limited experience and cannot explore more deeply. For further research, it can be done by looking at the categories of fans that are

associated with factors that influence the level of interest. Research can also be done qualitatively to see the level of hobby influences consumption behavior or buying coins just to show participatory fandom as a fan.

Indonesia can learn from the phenomenon of K-Pop fandom.

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