

A Descriptive Analysis of Parasocial Interactions of Korean-Pop Fans on Indonesian Social Media

Kiki Esa Perdana

Tanri Abeng University

Corresponding Author: Kiki Esa Perdana esaperdana@tau.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Parsocial Interaction, Social Media, Kpop

Received : 2 August

Revised : 14 August

Accepted: 18 September

©2023 Perdana: This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Atribusi 4.0 Internasional](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



ABSTRACT

Since kim young sam's government, South Korea has undergone a massive expansion in the field of culture. The Korean wave is one of their cultural products that entered Indonesians. Many Korean popular culture are consumed by many indonesians, one of which is pop or korean-pop music. By seeing this situations, the researcher is interested in the studying the pattern of interaction between them, especially their parasocial interactions on social media. Social media itself can be effective medium because it has no place or time limitation. The results of this study indicate that the parasocial interactions they carry out is still carried out with asense of pride, eventough they know the idol does not respond back and does not even know about interaction experimence they are having. This research uses the desriptive analysis method because it wants to describe somrthing more clearly

INTRODUCTION

We cannot deny that at this time technological advances, especially communication technology, have been very developed. There are many platforms that make it easier for us as a society to get information from various parts of the world. Another convenience is how we can easily connect with people anywhere and anytime. Everything looks much easier now than a few years ago, when we wanted to find information about something that required considerable effort and funds. Satellite, which is useful for transmitting telephone communication signals as well as television broadcast signals throughout the world; fiber optic cable, which functions to connect computers or users to one another within a certain network scope; and the internet, as a major invention, which functions as access to information, knowledge, and education; convenience facilities for business; as well as providing entertainment through the various platforms it provides. With the internet, we can easily get and share various types of information from anywhere, even in a different time zone.

The internet, as one of the great inventions of the modern era, continues to grow bigger and bigger. Many internet service provider companies, including cell phone card providers, continue to develop their services so that they are increasingly sophisticated and modern, even in remote areas, making it easier for people everywhere to enjoy their network services. With that, people can easily access various types of information whenever they want, including from Korea. This development can occur due to the development of globalization. Globalization itself is a term in the study of international politics that more or less explains the increasing interrelationships between nations and between people throughout the world in many ways, including communication technology, trade, investment, culture, and various forms of communication interaction.

When it comes to popular culture that is consumed by the masses, not just South Korea and Asia in general, almost the entire world in the 1980s and 1990s was dominated by various forms of popular culture from America, ranging from music, film, and even culinary arts. South Korea was at that time one of the main consumers of popular culture in America.

However, everything changed drastically. South Korea, which was previously unaffected in the field of the popular culture industry and even included a country that had a minimal position in this field, has now succeeded in becoming one of the largest cultural exporting countries in the world.

South Korea has become a country with a very large cultural industry capable of exporting its popular cultural products to many countries, ranging from culinary, music, drama, film, culinary, lifestyle, and even fashion, all of which spread their influence all over the world. During the reign of Kim Young Sam (1993–1998), South Korea issued an official policy from the government called the "Five Year Cultural Development Plan," whose essence was to emphasize the development of the cultural industry and the utilization of the information technology sector, which at that time was already considered advanced.

At that time, the South Korean government was so serious about this official policy that they established a bureau called the Cultural Industry Bureau, which

specifically focused on the production of the cultural industry as a national strategic industry through increasing independent production and training, so that in the future they hoped to minimize the influence and consumption of culture.

Another example of American popular culture prioritizing popular culture of its own creation

From the policy and creation of this special agency, we know the long-term effect is to produce quite a large Korean popular culture called the Korean Wave, also called Hallyu. The Korean Wave itself started and is very synonymous with the world of entertainment such as music, drama, and variety shows that are nicely packaged presenting original Korean artists and culture, but over time and with the acceptance of the world community for this movement, this Korean wave has developed into other fields that are easy to implement in the daily lives of lovers of Korean culture wherever they are. are, starting from the style of dress, drama, food, skincare, sports, and language. Currently, officially, South Korea is one of the only countries in the world that has made arts and culture a part of their country's industry.

It is undeniable that the development of communication technology has become one of the supporting factors for the success of this official movement, which is fully supported by the government. The presence of social media as a product of communication technology in society has provided enormous benefits. Social media is very helpful in spreading

Korean Wave information from Korea to all corners of the world, including Indonesia, erasing distance and time between people so that whenever and wherever people can enjoy this Korean Wave cultural movement. According to Hotapea and Marlina (2022), The development of Korean pop culture (Hallyu) in East Asian countries and several Southeast Asian countries, including Indonesia, shows that there is quite a strong cultural transformation from one country to another. The development of Korean pop culture in Indonesia is evidenced by the emergence of the "Asian Fans Club" (AFC), an Indonesian blog that contains news about the world of Korean entertainment. Based on statistical data from the Alexa Pagerank site, Asian Fans Club is the largest "Korean Entertainment" site in Indonesia. Meanwhile, in terms of demographic characteristics, almost all visitors to the Asian Fans Club come from Indonesia, most of whom are women under the age of 25 with internet access at home or school. If we look at the statistics on the number of visitors, until June 3, 2011, the Asian Fans Club had received 42,811,744 visitors. This means that the Asian Fans Club is visited by an average of 58,646 people every day. The number of posts from June 2009 to June 2011 reached 16,974 posts, with a graph of the number of posts that continues to increase every month.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Putri, Liany, and Nuraeni (2019), In Indonesia itself, the spread of pop culture from Korea began in 2002 after the World Cup in South Korea and Japan, which then continued with the introduction of the South Korean drama series, or K-Drama, to Indonesian society. K-Pop is the name for Korean pop music, which literally stands for Korean Pop. K-Pop has become a popular culture in South Korea, not just because of its music, but because the dances performed by every singer in South Korea are its own "selling point".

Because, indeed, the goal of K-Pop is also a cultural invasion, music agencies in Korea hold auditions for K-Pop singers from other countries such as America, Canada, China, Japan, and Thailand In an article issued by unique authors, which was reported by CNN Indonesia in 2022, Indonesia is listed as the country with the largest number of K-Pop fans in cyberspace in 2021 (<https://rb.gy/tdabxm>).



Picture 1. The Country That Talks About K-Pop the Most in The World (<https://rb.gy/7byt9>)

With various kinds of achievements and networking skills, either directly or indirectly, forms of interaction occur between Korean popular culture enthusiasts and their supporters. In KBBI, interaction is defined as "interaction/interaksi/n things that take action, relate to, and influence each other; interrelationships; social dynamic social relations between individuals and individuals, between individuals and groups, and between groups and groups" (<https://kbbi.web.id/interaksi>). If you look at the definition according to the KBBI, then interaction requires two parties who communicate with each other, not just one side. However, in this case, the interaction that is carried out is a parasocial interaction because of the many limitations, starting from the distance in terms of area and distance in terms of boundaries between celebrities and their supporters. Kpop itself is the meaning of K-Pop, which is Korean Pop or popular

music originating from South Korea. The genre of music in question also varies, from hip-hop to jazz, rock, electronic dance, and so on.

The word communication itself, or communication in English, comes from the Latin *communis*, which means "same", *communico*, communication, or *communicare*, which means "to make common" (to make common). The first term (*communis*) is the term most often used to derive the word communication, which is the root of other similar Latin words. Communication suggests that a thought, a meaning, or a message is shared equally. (Mulyana, 2005). Social interaction is a relationship between two or more human individuals in which the behavior of one individual influences, changes, or improves the behavior of another individual, or vice versa (Bonner in Gerungan, 2000).

Parasocial interactions are one-sided love. The figure in question could be a musician, movie star, celebrity, or influencer, and the writer is trying to do this research on K-pop Idols. Many K-pop fans are so crazy that they buy all their idol's releases, send gifts, and hold meetings with fellow fans to worship the idol. In fact, the idol himself does not know his fans one by one. The idol may also never return the attention of his fans. Parasocial interactions are interactions that are formed between consumers and celebrities through mediated channels (Shoffner, 2019).

Parasocial relationships are sometimes seen as imaginary relationships experienced by fans who idolize celebrities and occur in one direction, namely from fans to these celebrities (Sitasari, Rozali, Arumsari, & Setyawan, 2019). Parasocial theory is based on virtual relationships between celebrities and their fans, but these relationships are intimated as interpersonal relationships that fans perceive as real (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). Parasocial relationships are considered one way because usually fans who are in the age range of teenagers and young adults feel close to their idol celebrities while the celebrities don't know them at all (Sulianti, Lubis, Az-Zahra, & Hambali, 2018). Parasocial relationships allow these consumers to identify themselves with celebrities, either through attitudes or behavior; this then provides opportunities for celebrities to influence their audience (Chung & Cho, 2017). Parasocial relationships may lead to high levels of empathy from fans toward celebrities (Frederick, Lim, Clavio, & Walsh, 2012). Pop culture itself is a culture that is mass-produced and published through mass media in which the interests of the capitalists and the government are hidden. It is called mass culture. This cultural growth means providing an increasingly narrow space for all types of culture that cannot produce money and cannot be mass-produced (Strinati, 2007:12).

The definition of social media is a web-based social networking site that allows individuals to build public or semi-public profiles in a restricted system, list other users with whom they are connected, and view and explore their list of connections made by others with the system (Henderi, 2007: 3).

METHODOLOGY

The research uses a qualitative descriptive research method that aims to explain clearly how fans can interpret the text conveyed by their idols so that they can bring up parasocial interactions. By using the constructivism paradigm, the researcher hopes that the object of research can express their point of view openly and provide an interesting description of their perceptions. This study selects news about parasocial interactions on social media—an interaction without feedback or an interaction carried out by only one party. In this case, the communicators are fans of Korean popular culture, while the communicators are celebrities from Korean culture.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The process of communication is basically the process of conveying thoughts or feelings from one person (the communicator) to another person (the communicant). These thoughts take various forms; they can take the form of many things, starting from messages, information, opinions, and even feelings that are in the mind.

For fans of Korean popular culture, especially the music, showing their identity through social media can be regarded as a fairly important form of existence. From these interactions, they can more or less show how much "militancy" they have in idol groups. On a larger scale, they form groups within the community to facilitate interaction; these communities are usually in the form of fan clubs (a community created by a group of people who like one group). or one particular public figure), in order to make it easier for them to interact with fellow fans.

With this network, there are also quite a few activities that they usually do both offline and online. Some of the activities that are usually done offline include watching idol content together, gatherings, and Noraebang (karaoke together) activities. But apart from that, there are also events that focus on online interaction activities, for example, streaming their idol's Music Video simultaneously every time a new idol group videoclip or documentation appears (for example, behind-the-scenes video clips or personal documentation of personnel, voting together to support idols). This is when there is an award based on online voting. In fact, compared to fans of Korean movies or dramas, fans of K-pop music are considered more "militant" than other consumers of Korean popular culture because many of the things they do are quite extraordinary to show their existence through social media.

For example, this can be easily seen through the collections they have: buy their idols' original music album releases directly from Korea; buy various merchandise of celebrity figures at relatively high prices, ranging from photocards, bags, mugs, light sticks, hand fans, and the season's greeting package (a package containing a card, jacket, or also cardigans, t-shirts, and hats); the prices vary, ranging from 10,000 to tens of millions of rupiah. According to a survey by Katadata Insight Center (KIC) (2022), 1,609 South Korean entertainment fans spread across Indonesia Respondents are dominated by Generation Z (age 17–25 years) and Millennials (age 26–41 years), and the majority come from the middle and lower socio-economic classes. Around 30%

have merchandise in the form of a collection of photos of their idols. There are also respondents who have albums, T-shirts, DVDs, light sticks, and various other merchandise from their idols, but the portion is smaller. The KIC survey also found that the majority of South Korean entertainment fans in Indonesia prefer to enjoy free idol content that they can get through social media and illegal streaming websites. Meanwhile, fans who are willing to pay generally only spend less than IDR 2 million a year (<https://rb.gy/taraox>). Even though it is known for its "militant" pop music fans Korea, some even dare to send gifts directly to their idols in Korea. On another level, they are also diligent in watching concerts at the same time as each of their idols performs concerts abroad, which are not far from Indonesia, and hold meetings with fellow fans to watch or show collections. the work of the idol or fan meeting with a sizeable scale and funds, even donating to several natural disasters in Indonesia with a sizable amount of donations in the name of oneself as a fan of an idol group. Various forms of interaction with the network are actually positive because they make many things easier, either in terms of finances or just limited to interactions between fellow fans. For example, they facilitate the process of buying and selling merchandise, whether original or not, which automatically helps the wheels of the economy. makes it easier to chat about idols in their group with people who are one and the same idol in the community, which automatically helps the intensity of friendship and psychological closeness of relationships between people; makes it easier to get the latest information about their idol group; makes it easier to network in getting things, for example, making accommodation easier if concerts or fan-meetings are held in a certain city; makes it easier to hold events or activities such as fanbase meetings, which makes it easier to get manpower; makes it easy for friends to watch concerts abroad together; makes it easy to get business relationships; and various other conveniences.

Social Media

Social media itself is considered an effective medium because it has no space or time barriers. On social media, everyone can be whoever they want by using the account model (both fake and real) they want and doing whatever activities they want. Starting from building parasocial relationships that act in the same direction, trying to carry out routine interactions with idols, for example, venting about daily problems (work, education, family), defending in a loud way every time there is another account that offends the idol, not infrequently even with harsh swear words, even though the idol himself You will never know and feel defended about this, but in this case, the account owner will not feel afraid because, from the start, you feel free to appear without a fake account that doesn't show your true identity.



Picture 2. An Example of Swearing By K-Pop Fans When Someone Nudges the Idol

The freedom of social media also makes fans free to interact with their idols and between fellow fans anytime and anywhere in any discussion. Not infrequently, they don't actually know each other, but with the capital of liking the same idol figure, they can get along easily. They also often mention their idols on social media, even though they are not related to the music or works that their idols have, usually in the form of outpourings about problems from school, college, work, and family. The most important thing in this case is that they can interact, even though they actually realize that the pattern of interaction they do will not receive feedback from the idol. At a certain level, there are also fans who only post on social media to show that they come directly to idol concerts abroad, buy official merchandise at official stores, and come to fan meetings with expensive tickets. Fans of this model also continue to carry out interactions that want to show their existence more to fellow fans than to idols. Even through social media, fans often ask about or share information related to their idols with other fans via social media sites such as Twitter or Instagram. Fans feel that information from fellow fans really helps them keep up to date with the latest information about their idols. Fans also reveal that the information provided by fellow fans is more detailed and accurate than that from other media. According to Fauziah (2015), usually the activity of fans using social media is to find out any information about their idols. Fans will find out what news, events, and activities are being carried out by their idols. This was revealed by Cohen (2014): the arrival of the internet and fan sites fulfilled the audience's desire to continue learning about their idols. The use of social media has changed relationships, making it easier for celebrities to communicate constantly with fans who are now called 'friends and 'followers' on Facebook. Twitter and Instagram

Parasocial interactions

A study by Jihyun Kim and Hayeon Song (2016) explains that a person's parasocial relationship with celebrities is positively influenced by professional self-disclosure (telling about work), personal self-disclosure (telling about personal life), and retweeting (a feature of the Twitter application to spread re-links to other people, in this case a celebrity).

This can be interpreted as meaning that social media is indeed the most appropriate place for the formation of parasocial relationships because, with social media, most fans, especially those who use fake usernames or use second accounts (accounts that are not real accounts), are used to be more free in their opinions and to vent on social media to people they don't know, which should be something that is personal and not to be spread to the general public.

Meanwhile, a study conducted by Young Min Baek, Young Bae, and Hyunmi Jang (2013) shows that reliance on parasocial relationships is positively correlated with a sense of loneliness but negatively correlated with interpersonal distrust (discomfort in being open with others). This can also mean that sometimes Korean pop fans on social media are people who find it a little difficult to open up to other people in the real world, but on the other hand, Korean pop fans are also closely related to loneliness, for example, due to a lack of friends or partners to share in daily life, so that everyone is focused on the parasocial relationship with the idol.

Parasocial interaction itself is interpreted simply as the response given by individuals to media figures in the media as if these figures are in the room where the individual is, perhaps at a certain level, and the individual is crying, laughing, having fun, or grieving at their idol, even though in fact what is faced is only the photocard and the actual interaction object is not in the room.

The interaction on social media is actually more one-way communication because various kinds of limitations exist between fans and their idols, starting from the distance or position of each, but in this pre-social interaction, there is still a sense of pride that they can feel when carrying out these interactions, because even in unidirectional interactions, they can feel that they can share their feelings with their idols and express their feelings to their idols, even though they themselves are aware of the interactions they are doing. That's why this parasocial interaction is positively correlated with a sense of loneliness.

Not only pouring out these feelings, but various other interaction experiments were also made by Korean music fans through social media, for example, making song covers, making dance covers, creating boyfriend material content (from the point of view of if they were dating an idol), and creating content. editing as if taking a photo or even going on a date with an idol, making graphic designs congratulating the idol every time the idol celebrates something, for example a birthday, or making edited content on a married photo with the idol.



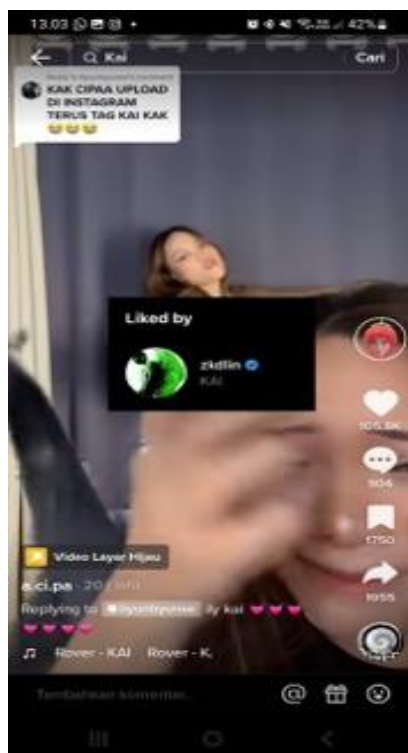
Picture 3. Example of Boyfriend Material Content or Point of View on Dating an Idol (Documentation of Sources)



Picture 4. Example of an Edited Passport Photo for Marriage at the Religion Office (<https://Rb.Gy/Bfqg56>)

However, along with these intense social interactions, the idol himself occasionally gives feedback on the interactions that his fans make, so that his fans are always close, feel special, and are cared for by the idol. Apart from being useful economically by protecting fans, this is also done to maintain the intensity of idol interactions with fans. This happens because direct interactions are almost rare, and the intensity of direct meetings between them is also very rare and limited, ranging from financial difficulties to time and distance. Some of the things that

idols usually do to repay the interactions given by their fans include Making songs for fans, greeting fans in fan meetings or short videos, and showing photos that the idol really keeps as gifts from fans.



Picture 5. An Example of Interaction From A Member of A Korean Idol Group With Fans, Giving "Likes" to Tiktok Posts by Fans Who Dance Covers of Their Songs (<https://vt.tiktok.com/ZS84V7F5m/>)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

South Korea communicates with other countries using the Korean Wave culture (a popular cultural term that spreads outside Korea) to change its image in the world as a country that prioritizes national culture. What the South Korean government has done through the Korean Wave has also had an impact on kpop-loving teenage fans who use social media. Politically, this is actually something that deserves a thumbs up.

The government's full support underlines the success of the spread of this culture, making Korean culture not only consumed by neighboring countries, but also throughout the world, including in Indonesia. This cultural effect does not only have an impact on the field of performing arts, but also has an impact on the psychological side of Korean pop culture fans in Indonesia. Korean pop culture fans actually never feel physically close to their idols, but with the frequent consumption of Korean pop culture information, Korean pop culture fans feel that their relationship with their idols is a close and special one, and even in some cases, there is a real relationship that already involves the physical, not just a relationship limited to mere imagination.

Not infrequently, the act of parasocial interaction is considered something different for the general public; sometimes it is even seen as a form of hallucination. However, due to various kinds of obstacles, the interaction between an idol and their community is not possible in the real world, so parasocial interactions are more likely to be carried out. Parasocial interaction, even though it is not a real two-way interaction, brings joy to fans of Korean pop culture because they can feel closeness even though it is only a fantasy.

When in fact only fans feel their closeness because idols create a communication style that leads to two-way communication and seems to place fans as partners in this communication.

Korean pop culture fans in Indonesia are actually aware of this and think that any form of interaction they have with their idols is almost impossible and very unlikely to get feedback; but these various activities are only based on happiness and a form of love for their idols, even though they realize that all are just parasocial interactions.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Research on parasocial interaction continues to need the latest updates because developments through social media will continue to change along with the development of technology, times, and human mindsets.

REFERENCES

- Afriyani, Fauziah. (2015). Analisis Faktor Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Kontribusi Sektor Pariwisata Untuk Mendukung Peningkatan Padi di Kota Palembang. *Jurnal Profit* Volume 2, Nomor 2 November 2015.
- Annisa nianda, diwawancarai oleh kiki esa perdana, maret 2023, Analisis deskriptif interaksi parasosial penggemar Korean-pop di media social, Tanri Abeng University, Indonesia.
- Bonner, H. 2000 *Dinamika Kelompok*, Jakarta: Bumi Aksara
- Cohen, et al. (2007). *Metode Penelitian dalam Pendidikan*. New York. Routledge. 657 Hal.
- Chung, Siyoung dan Cho, Hichang. 2017. Fostering Parasocial Relationships With Celebrities on Social Media: Implications for Celebrity Endorsement. *Journal Psychology and Marketing*. 34 (4), 481-495.
- Dominic. Strinati, *An Introduction of Popular Culture*.ed. Abdul Mukhis (Yogyakarta: PT Bentang Pestaka 1995).
- Farrah adeline, diwawancarai oleh Kiki Esa Perdana, maret 2023, Analisis deskriptif interaksi parasosial penggemar Korean-pop di media social indonesia, Tanri Abeng University, Indonesia.
- Frederick, E. L., Lim, C. H., Clavio, G., & Walsh, P. (2012). Why we follow: an examination of parasocial interaction and fan motivations for following athlete archetypes on twitter. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 5(4), 481-502. <https://doi.org/10.1123/ijsc.5.4.481>
- Henderi, Muhammad Yusup, Yuliana Isma Graha. 2007. *Pengertian Media Sosial*, (Online) (<http://wlipurn.blogspot.co.id/2017/04/wlipurn.html>, diakses pada 19 Februari 2017)
- Mulyana Deddy. 2005. *Ilmu Komunikasi Suatu Pengantar*. Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya
- Nabi, Robin L., Oliver, Mary Beth. (2009). *Media Processes and Effect*. California: SAGE Publication, Inc.
- Putri, Idola Perdini., Farah Dhiba Putri Liany, dan Reni Nuraeni. (2019). "K-drama dan Penyebaran Korean Wave di Indonesia." *Jurnal ProTVF*. 3 (1): 69-78

- Shoffner, L. K. (2019). Parasocial Relationship Influence on CoverGirl Buying Intentions: Trust and Loyalty from SMI and Celebrity Endorsements. In (Doctoral dissertation, Appalachian State University).
- Sitasari, N., Rozali, Y., Arumsari, A., & Setyawan, D. (2019). Self-Esteem and Celebrity Worship in Social Network Bollywood Mania Club Indonesia Members in Jakarta. Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Business, Law and Pedagogy, ICBLP 2019. European Alliance for Innovation (EAI).
- Sokolova, K., & Kefi, H. (2020). Instagram and YouTube Bloggers Promote It, Why Should I Buy? How Credibility and Parasocial Interaction Influence Purchase Intentions. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 53(January 2019), 101742.
- Sulianti, A., Lubis, F. S., Az-Zahra, F., & Hambali, A. (2018). Can emotional intelligence restrain excess celebrity worship in bio-psychological perspective? IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering.