

Blackpink Fans' Perception of Consuming Content On Youtube

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ABSTRAK

This research discusses how BlackPink fans, called BLINK, as an audience of BlackPink YouTube content because this research is motivated by fans who have their own way of idolizing someone. This research uses a descriptive qualitative research approach using the case study method. The research data was obtained from in-depth interview techniques with four informants, where it was found out why fans love BlackPink content on YouTube and idolize them more than other idols. The conclusion of this study shows how fans interpret BlackPink YouTube content as BLINK likes BlackPink YouTube content because of interest in BlackPink itself, which in any content shared can be entertaining and used as a source for fans to learn more about BlackPink as a group and as individuals. Furthermore, the level of fanatical devotion can be observed through their frequent responses to BlackPink's YouTube content, such as commenting, liking, and sharing among fellow fans.

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1. Introduction

The Hallyu phenomenon of Korean culture has gained great popularity in the world. In its development, Hallyu itself began to rise and receive positive response from Asian countries in mid-2000s, and since 2010, South Korea has intelligently spread the wings of Hallyu phenomenon to European and American markets. With the popularity of interest from many countries, this phenomenon impacts the economic sector and South Korean politics, society, and culture. Hallyu is the name given to the international success of Korean culture [1]. The term Hallyu was coined by a Chinese journalist in 1998 when he saw that news about K-drama and K-pop were dominating newspapers and magazines in China. Beijing Youth Daily is a print media in China that first used the term Hallyu in its report on the success of K-Pop idol groups holding their concert in Beijing in November 1999.

Behind its current glory, the K-pop industry has a long history that is interesting to explore. South Korea is known for its high musicality. Western music as a pioneer of the pop music genre was present in South Korea in the late 19th century, bringing new instruments, ladders, and jazz. The 1960-1970s became the era of South Korea's rise through the development of musical arts with the development of rock, folk and funk genre music, so that music from outside was much liked. However, by 1975, the South Korean government was authoritarian enough to dislike elements that were contrary to their culture. They cracked down violently on the sect[2].

By the 1980s, rock and funk music was no longer popular and was replaced by ballads. In 1987, military rule ended and a new constitution allowed freedom of speech. All of the changes that occurred caused South Korea to continue to change, so South Korean arts and entertainment soon recovered. Modern K-pop began on March 23, 1992, when Seo Taiji and Boys (Yang Hyung-suk and Lee Jun) released their first album, which

dominated music at the time [2]. The three-member boy group is a hip-hop group with a high energy choreography.

Another founder of K-pop was Lee So-man, a singer and presenter who was interested in studying Western music and was in love at the time. Lee So-man looked for a way to bring the Western music he was studying into South Korean music through the establishment of SM Entertainment[2]. In 1996, Lee So-man successfully managed a successful idol called H.O.T, which was followed by a girl group called S.E.S. In 1998, he also managed idols that are still shining today, namely Super Junior, Girls' Generation, TVXQ, EXO, NCT and Red Velvet. In addition, producers Yang Hyung-suk founded YG Entertainment (iKON, Bigbang, BlackPink, etc.) and Park Jin-young founded JYP Entertainment (2PM, GOT7, TWICE, etc.).

YG Entertainment is an entertainment company in South Korea founded on February 24, 1996 by Yang Hyun-Suk. YG's record labels are companies, talent agencies, music and concert production companies, promoters, and record labels. YG has several subsidiaries including clothing lines, golf management and cosmetics. Along with SM Entertainment and JYP Entertainment, YG Entertainment is one of the top three record labels in the K-pop industry. YG Entertainment specializes in R&B and hip-hop music and features several famous K-pop singers who have managed to attract international attention, such as Big Bang, AKMU, Winner, iKON, BlackPink, Jinusean, Treasure and others. Meanwhile, actors such as Kang Dong-Won, Choi Ji-Woo and Cha Seung-Won. YG has released many top and well-known stars, so many people in South Korea compete to become a part of YG Entertainment, and one of the "golden children" of YG Entertainment is BlackPink [3].

BlackPink is a South Korean girl group produced by YG Entertainment that debuted on August 8, 2016 with a single album titled "Square One" [4]. BlackPink consists of four members: Jennie Kim from South Korea, who serves as the center, lead vocalist, and main rapper. He was the first member to be introduced by YG Entertainment. The second is Lalisa Manoban from Thailand, who holds the positions of lead rapper, sub-vocalist and main dancer. Thirdly, Kim Jisoo from South Korea serves as the lead vocalist and visual. Finally, Roseanne Park from Auckland is the lead vocalist and dancer [5].

BlackPink is a girl group from South Korea that has been recognized internationally. Since their debut, BlackPink have achieved many successes, records and awards both domestically and internationally. They are the only South Korean girl group with the most followers on social media and the first girl group to top the album charts in the United States and the United Kingdom[6]. BlackPink is one of the girl groups with the largest fanbase in Indonesia and the world. Fandom itself can be interpreted as a group or community of fans who enthusiastically idolize people or groups of people with the same hobbies and activities. In other words, a fandom is a community formed by a group of people with commonalities, language, culture, and art that only that group understands [7]. BlackPink's own fandom is called "Blink". The presence of social media, which makes news about K-pop easily spread and easily accessible around the world, makes it easy for fans to know the latest activities, news, and commercial activities of their idols. With the progress, we discussed how Blink (블링크) is called for BlackPink fans as an audience consuming BlackPink YouTube content.

Blink is the fandom name of the popular girl group BlackPink itself, and is often referred to as Blink in Korean. Blink is a fandom name that YG Entertainment officially announced in January 2017, which is 5 (five) months after the debut of BlackPink. Just like the name of BlackPink, the unofficial color or what fans make as the color of the Blink fandom is pink writing on a black background, showing the connection between BlackPink and Blink[8]. This naming aims to make it easier for BlackPink fans to identify each other and later become a nickname for them when there is an event or activity related to BlackPink, an example is when the BlackPink awards show can easily mention their fans to be Blink. As a fan, Blink will usually support any activity conducted by BlackPink such as streaming music videos, voting for awards, streaming on music platforms, and others.

The South Korean entertainment industry is very popular in the world thanks to the Korean Wave, especially K-Pop, which includes many terms such as bias, aegyo, and maknae. The success of K-pop idols cannot be separated from the support of fans in the form of buying merchandise, albums, attending concerts, and voting for awards. These fans belong to a term called fandom. Fandom, or short for fan and kingdom, is a term that means fan group. Fandom consists of a collection of fans who identify as a group that supports their idols because they share the same interests with a large number of people, thus forming a social network with collective experiences. Each K-pop idol group (boy group/girl group) has a special nickname for their fandom, such as EXO (EXO-L), BlackPink (Blink), Girls' Generation (SONE), Red Velvet (Reveluv), and others. K-pop idol groups not only have fandom names, but also have their own official colors and lightstick shapes, which are usually carried at concerts so that it becomes their own characteristic as a differentiator from the fandoms of other groups [9].

Research on K-pop fans has been the subject of research that has been conducted. The first research by Veren Susanto & Suzy S. Azeharie [10] highlights the importance of symbols in ARMY and EXO-L fandom

culture, aiming to understand the symbolic processes that occur and identify the meanings associated with these symbols. The second study examined the parasocial interactions and media activities of ARMY fans on Twitter, focusing on the psychological reactions of these fans [11]. The third study examined the fanaticism behaviors of K-pop fans on Instagram, looking at the activities fans engaged in and their reactions to negative or false information about their idols [12]. While the fourth study analyzed the construction of fantasy and discourse in the context of K-Pop BlackPink by examining the influence of textual dimensions such as fashion style and beauty figures on fan fanaticism [13].

These studies provide insight into how K-pop fans interact, shape fandom culture, and express admiration for their idols. These studies also show the important role of social media in facilitating communication and interaction between K-pop artists and their fans. The results of this study can provide further understanding of the K-pop phenomenon and its contribution to popular culture as well as communication between artists and fans.

Furthermore, this article describes the communication behavior in terms of the importance of BlackPink fans "blinking" as an audience for BlackPink's YouTube content. In addition, the media used in the research will focus on YouTube social media because in fact YouTube is currently one of the platforms that is widely used and accessed by fans to get information about their idols and not infrequently, a lot of content is centered on the media. Therefore, this study investigates how fans interpret the content they watch as viewers of BlackPink content on YouTube. In this case, it is about whether these Blink tend to accept BlackPink's content well by not protesting against criticism. Or whether these Blink disagrees with the content that BlackPink provides on YouTube.

2. METHOD

The research method used in this study is a case study. A case study is an in-depth exploration of a bound system or case in a real-life context. According to John W Creswell, a case study is an exploration of a bound system or a case or various cases that over time through in-depth data collection and certainly involve various sources of information that are rich or influential in a context [14]. This study used the case study method to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon and behavior of BlackPink fans on the YouTube platform.

The case study method was used to collect data by searching for valid data related to BlackPink and its content on YouTube. Data was obtained through YouTube searches and journal articles. In addition, as a form of primary data collection, in-depth interviews were conducted with four informants who were fans of BlackPink or Blink. The instrument used in this study is the researcher as the main instrument. In addition, in-depth interviews are also used as a tool to obtain complete information from sources. Question lists and recording tools are used as guides and tools to store interview data for later analysis.

3. Results And Discussion

The research results show why BlackPink's content appeals to fans and what type of content is commonly consumed. In addition, it was discovered what kind of actions BlackPink fans (blink) give to BlackPink content and how they interpret the BlackPink YouTube content they watch. Finally, we got information about each fan's different levels of loyalty to BlackPink.

The Blink enjoy BlackPink's content on YouTube. This study's subjects are four informants who have been Blink for many years. There are some Blink who agree with BlackPink's content and there are also Blink who disagree with BlackPink's content presented on YouTube. Then there is the subject of trait research, which is the nature described by Blink when they see BlackPink content and when BlackPink is criticized by haters. The following are the results of the research conducted using the interview method and through the process of coding 4 young people who are a Blink.

1. Informant 1: A person who likes BlackPink and has been following them since before their debut. It can be said that Informant is a big fan of BlackPink or Blink hardline because he is willing to put effort in the form of watching concerts to buying merchandise from BlackPink. In addition, Informant also likes to watch BlackPink content, especially in his spare time, because it is very interesting and can entertain him.
2. Informant 2: An individual who likes BlackPink and has been following them since 2018. However, due to his busy life for some time, Informant consumes BlackPink content on YouTube less often. Then, the informant created Blackpink's YouTube content as an encouragement. Informer is a hardcore BlackPink fan because he is willing to make efforts, such as watching a concert.
3. Informant 3: A person that really likes BlackPink and their work. The informant also includes Blink, who follows all the content that BlackPink presents on YouTube. The content consumed by the informant was one of the reasons he wanted to meet BlackPink in person. However, the informant is more concerned

and prioritizes primary interests, even though he is a BlackPink fan, so the informant supports BlackPink according to her ability.

4. Informant 4: An individual who has liked Blackpink since 2017 because of their easy listening songs and also because of the cute personalities of the BlackPink members. As a Blink informant, he often consumes BlackPink's content, especially on YouTube. After consuming BlackPink's YouTube content, especially during concerts, he became even more interested in meeting BlackPink in person. The biggest effort he has ever made is to watch a concert.

In the discussion section, the author explained the experiences and impressions of four informants who were fans of BlackPink or Blink. Each informant has a different level of love and commitment to BlackPink. The first informant was a die-hard fan or hardcore Blink who had been following BlackPink since before their debut. The second informant also likes BlackPink, although he consumes their content less frequently these days.

Meanwhile, the third informant is very fond of BlackPink and follows all of their content on YouTube. However, the informant also prioritizes her main interests. Finally, the fourth informant has been a fan of BlackPink since 2017. Interestingly, this informant is interested in their easy listening songs and the funny personalities of BlackPink members. The four informants watched BlackPink's content on YouTube, and some even watched concerts supporting their idols. The discussion will include their experiences, impressions, and efforts as fans to support BlackPink.

The Blink' interest in BlackPink became a motive for fans to consume BlackPink's content on YouTube. The Blink consume BlackPink content on YouTube to appreciate the BlackPink members who have worked hard so far, and many Blink also respond to BlackPink content on YouTube. Responses to content come in the form of likes, comments, and also sharing links with other Blink. Next, BlackPink fans, or "Blink" as they are called, interpret the YouTube content shared by BlackPink as a place to find information so that they can learn more about the BlackPink group, especially the BlackPink members themselves.

There is a difference in the level of loyalty among BlackPink fans. If BlackPink fans or so-called Blink fans are fanatical, then these fanatical fans will be willing to set aside money to buy albums, buy BlackPink accessories, and also watch BlackPink concerts. But if fans are not too fanatical, they will only watch BlackPink content presented on YouTube and give likes, comments, and share links. However, BlackPink fans still make great efforts to appreciate BlackPink, even though there are differences in the things they do.

The discussion about the importance of BlackPink fans, or Blink, to BlackPink content on YouTube shows that there is a strong motivation for fans to consume the content. Blink view BlackPink's YouTube content as a place to appreciate the hard work of BlackPink members and to learn more about the group and its members. Blink can be categorized based on their level of loyalty and engagement. The diehard fans, or the diehard blink, will actively participate by purchasing albums, accessories, and even willingly attending BlackPink concerts. They spend a lot of time and money to directly support BlackPink. On the other hand, there are also fans who are not as fanatical, but still watch BlackPink content on YouTube and provide support by liking, commenting, and sharing links with other Blink.

Although there are differences in the level of engagement and actions taken by fanatics and not-so-fanatics, they all make great efforts to appreciate BlackPink. Through their reactions to BlackPink's content on YouTube, such as liking, commenting, and sharing links, Blink showed their support and gratitude to BlackPink members for their efforts and contributions. Overall, the receptivity of Blink to consuming BlackPink content on YouTube reflects their level of interest, appreciation, and sense of connection to the group. The content provides a platform for fans to stay informed, express their feedback, and strengthen their bond with BlackPink and their fellow Blink.

In general, fans are interested in BlackPink because their content is considered interesting and entertaining, fans become more informed about their idol groups via BlackPink's YouTube content, and the frequency of viewing content shows how fans have received BlackPink's content in the past. In addition, the level of fans' fanaticism can be seen by how often they respond to BlackPink's YouTube content, such as commenting, liking, or sharing the content with other fans. The majority of popular culture consumers, especially fans of Korean pop artists in the study, not only consume popular culture, but also actively contribute by creating new artifacts. As observed in the analysis, BTS fans engage in participatory culture by producing their own creative works, including dance covers posted on YouTube, fan fiction stories shared on Wattpad, and being registered members on their idols' official websites [15].

Furthermore, if it is related to the concept of fandom, then it is as follows: fandom is a collection of individuals who are joined because of the same interest and have a goal to support the same idol. Each K-pop idol group itself has its own fandom name, and if it is related to this study, it can be concluded that BlackPink fans also have a fandom called Blink. Since they are integrated into a fandom, these Blink are also united in

supporting their idols, although the ways in which they support their idols are different, some support by always watching BlackPink content on Youtube, but there are also Blink who do not hesitate to spend a lot of money to support BlackPink by always buying BlackPink albums and also taking the time to watch BlackPink concerts. These are things that Blink are willing to do because they love and care about their idols.

4. Conclusion

The study concluded that BlackPink or Blink fans show different levels of interest and engagement with BlackPink content on YouTube. They use the content to appreciate the hard work of BlackPink members and find information about the group and its members. There are differences in the level of fan loyalty, with some being very fanatical and willing to spend financial effort and time to support BlackPink directly, while others are not too fanatical but still provide support through online interactions. The consumption of YouTube content by BlackPink fans reflects their level of interest, appreciation, and sense of connection to the group. The Blink use content on YouTube as a platform to get information, give feedback, and reinforce their bond with BlackPink and other Blink. There is a strong commitment to supporting their idol group, and fan reactions such as comments, likes, and link sharing are a form of support and gratitude for the efforts and contributions of BlackPink members. Blink's concept of fandom also shows solidarity and cohesion in supporting BlackPink, albeit in different ways. The overall study provides an understanding of the level of reception of BlackPink fans to content on YouTube and shows that fans make great efforts to appreciate and support BlackPink.

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