Fandom as a reward industry in Indonesia: Pleasures in pop music fan engagement and participation within online social networking

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the participation of pop music fandoms in fan base communities on popular social networking sites within Indonesia's context, to not only engage with content but also, to find pleasure. Practices in pop music fandom from the perspective and experience of fans are explored. The results reveal that fans find pleasure in being actively involved in their communities to connect with one another and with their favourite artist, interpret meanings in the creation of content and perform their identity as a part of the fandom. With visibility more possible through social media, it has become easier for fans to interact with artists, record labels, media partners and concert promoters. These interactions are perceived by the fans as emotional rewards, which then motivate them to engage in these activities and create a reward industry. In this reward industry, fans are included in collaborations with industry components, and therefore expand their networks and reinforce their role as being valuable to an artist's career.

Keywords: ***fandom, engagement, participation, social network, pop music***

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INTRODUCTION

This study reviewed the Anglo-American pop music industry and fandom culture in Indonesia. It does not follow the logic and argument of free labor, which is presented as the exploitation and manipulation of transnational media corporations (Hills, 2015; Hesmondhalgh, 2010). Instead, this study suggests that the fan culture of Anglo-American pop music offers rewards for its members. The dynamic world of fan culture has long existed prior to the internet era (Lewis, 2002, Goodwin, 1992). After the iconic American cable channel, MTV (Music TV) first started airing in 1981 (Jones, 2005), the pop music industry became inseparable from hysterical teenagers and obsessive fans (De Launey, 1995). MTV exerted a powerful influence of the Anglo-American pop music industry, especially on global youths (Burnett, 1996; Frith, Goodwin & Grossberg, 2005). MTV explored a significant new global trend in pop fan culture (Blum, 2007; Frith, 1991). In the late 1990s, fans all around the world experienced an unprecedented uptake and spread of Hallyu (Korean wave), Korea's soft power against the dominance of Anglo-American pop (Lee & Nornes, 2015; Kim, 2011; Park, 2015). This study suggests that although scholarship considers the importance of Korean pop culture's global fame (Marinescu, 2014; Pietrewicz, 2020), Anglo-American fan culture continues to generate popularity, including in Indonesia.

This study focuses on the Indonesian fans of Anglo-American pop music, exploring mainstream Top 40 artists from Anglo-American countries, such as United States, Canada, and Australia. A qualitative method was employed to explore participatory practices in pop music fandom and examine a participatory network focused on the production of transformative works (Wang, Xu, Saxton & Singhal, 2019; Click & Scott, 2018; Sullivan, 2012). The study focused on popular social media platforms, where fans intensely engage with Anglo-American pop music content that denotes the participatory culture (Jenkins, 2006; Takahashi, 2010), be it in terms of community as well as productivity. Fans engage in various transformative practices through their dynamic activities within fan base communities in the top three social networking services (SNS) in Indonesia: Instagram, Twitter and LINE (Hootsuite & We Are Social, 2018).

The study of fan culture exposes a plurality of sites where transformative works are entwined with social relations leading to a complex interplay of fans and industries that prevails (De Kosnik, 2012; Jenkins, 2012; Hills, 2015; Turk, 2014; Duffett, 2013; Ito, 2010). The interplay does not identify fans as interactive consumers of media product (Jenkins, 2012), but modifies relationships between fans and industries, manifested in various forms of gratifications, both material (De Kosnik, 2012) and immaterial (Duffett, 2013; Ito, 2010) and beyond (Hills, 2015). This study extends Duffet's argument that fan's excessive engagement involves pursuing pleasure (2013), rooted in meaning creation and dissemination within their community and beyond (Baym, 1998), whether face-to-face or in digital spaces (Click & Scott, 2018). A number of scholars critically view this pleasure-seeking activity from the Marxist perspective, thus suggesting pleasure is a form of fan volunteerism that involves unpaid labour (Hesmondhalgh, 2010). This study views pleasures as being motivated by rewards such as recognition and social participation (Ito, 2010). The purpose of this study is to examine the activities of fans in Indonesia by exploring their engagement with content and participation in social media communities from their perspectives and experiences. Furthermore, we investigate how the concept of pleasure and rewards is associated with these practices.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A fandom is characterised by the strong social ties between its members thanks to the constant interactions and exchanges of information in the community (Sullivan, 2012). Fans collaborate with each other to engage with popular culture texts by producing their own creative fan-made texts (Click & Scott, 2018), and practising new patterns of content consumption and promotion (Spano, 2016). Previous studies on music fandom reveal fan engagement with artists is manifested in various activities including writing and sharing of fanfictions (Lacasa, Zaballos, & Prieto, 2016), creating promotional tools for artists, chart beating and voting for them (Galuszka, 2015).

Engagement is defined as an audience's everyday involvement with a variety of media. It influences self-awareness and membership in a social group in the context of social changes and globalisation, thanks to technological advances (Takahashi, 2010). Engagement also represents "the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behaviour of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want" (Jenkins, 2006, p. 2). Several dimensions of audience engagement revolve around the notion of fandom, highlighting the participatory culture where people are united by the flow of content derived from the appropriation, reinterpretation and/or re-contextualisation of mass culture (Jenkins, 2018). In other words, audience's engagement with the media invites participation in producing culture and content through interactions and collaborations within the particular community (Fuchs, 2017). Although fan activities are not a new phenomenon, they have become significantly visible due to technological advancements that provide an infrastructure for fans to produce and present their content (Baym, Cavicchi & Coates, 2018). Digital media platforms such as social media provide the space for fandoms to interact, to the extent of creating a dynamic network through fan pages, forums and group chats — which add meaning to the commodity (Scholz, 2013; Hassler-Forest, 2016).

Duffett (2013) suggested that fan activities represent an inherent value within the community, anchored in fan's motivation to engage in various activities individually and as a community. In other words, fans seek pleasures related to an artist through meaning appropriation and performativity. According to Ito, practices refer to rewarding experience related to shared community goals (2010). Instead, fans seek non-economic rewards, obtained from the fun of producing and interacting with others (Hichibe & Tanaka, 2016). Although fan culture as a part of capitalism explains about economy incentives and fan culture as a part of the reward system has little to acknowledge, yet these are the evidences that disentangle the differences between different forms of non–commercial productions within the fan culture (Ito, 2010).

Duffett (2013) further classified fan activities according to three different types of pleasures. Firstly, activities associated with the pleasure of seeking a connection with their celebrated stars through staging encounters and collecting autographs. In the era of social media, an artist's active online presence is a source of information for fans and forms part of the fan culture. Bennett (2014) found that Lady Gaga's fan-artist relationships are built on Twitter and YouTube, where motivating messages from Lady Gaga herself form a strong social bond and sense of belonging in the fandom.

Secondly, activities that stem from the pleasures of appropriation whereby fans use a textual phenomenon as a form of raw material that they adapt to their own needs are evident in this culture (Duffett, 2013). For example, One Direction fans have used Twitter, Instagram and Wattpad to write and share their fanfictions of their favourite artists (Lacasa et al., 2016).

Finally, pleasures derived from performance through activities such as conference participation and impersonation (Duffett, 2013). In a participatory culture, fans are viewed as both

consumers and producers of content and their needs are supported by the features available on the social media platforms that they use. Social media allows these fans to voice their interests in certain texts by producing information for their community and/or including this information in a public profile. U2 and Tori Amos fans use Twitter and fan forum websites to upload live reports of concerts in the form of set lists, pictures, videos and even live streams and video calls (Bennett, 2012).

Driven by the described pleasures, fans devote their time and energy to fan activities, making fandom as a part of their daily routine and social life (van Krieken, 2018). They form a community as the space to actively engage in these activities while also interacting with others with the same interests as them. In defining the gift economy, Hyde (1999), Mauss (1954), and Booth (2010) (as cited by Chin, 2014), described how content production and exchange in fan base communities are considered as gifts within the group which leads to stronger social bonds between members. In addition, the gift exchange practice also leads to rewards for the individual and the community, such as status and recognition (Chin, 2014). Chin's study (2014) on Sherlockology and Galactica.tv found that fans of these TV series started fan sites as a form of entertainment. In fact, the fans are willing to spend much time, energy, and even money to secure privileges such as access to interview actors and crew members, press passes to events, and professional relationships with media producers. Elevation of status amongst fan base members as a result of their favorite star liking, replying or sharing their tweets or posts is also considered as a form of reward (Chin, 2018).

METHODOLOGY

In the current digital era, many fans use social media to create fan base communities. The latter term is used by Indonesian fandoms as an umbrella term for an online fan page or news portal that is created for fans in a particular country or city, as well as groups of fans in a region who voluntarily engage in offline grassroot promotional activities known as street team (Vellar, 2010).

This study explored fan base community members' experiences and interpretations on their fan practices, through in-depth interviews and observations (Bryman, 2012). A phenomenology research design was employed to clarify, explain and understand their lived experiences in the pop music fandom. Data were collected from a set of specific respondents (Neuman, 2003), who act as admins or curators in their fan base community, taking into account the curator's in-depth knowledge of community engagement and experience of more trasformative activities.

A list of Anglo-American pop artists who had appeared on the music box office charts and been nominated for awards in the past decade was created first. These artists were then divided into five categories: Solo male artist, solo female artist, male duo/group, female duo/group, and band. Subsequently, each artist's digital presence in fan base communities of Indonesia on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook was conducted by employing various keywords. Only the most prevalent results from each social media platform were included in the list. Information such as the fan base community's name, artist category, community presence on various social media platforms, number of followers and the last upload date of their social media page were collected. For each artist category, a ranking of communities based on the number of followers, presence on platforms, and most recent activity was created.

The process yielded five respondent groups: *Shawn Mendes Indonesia; Little Black Stars Indonesia* (Avril Lavigne fans); *Fifth Harmony Indonesia; Why Don't We ID;* and *5 Seconds of Summer Indonesia.* Interviews were conducted with two curators from *Little Black Stars Indonesia* and one curator from each of the other fan bases, totaling six interviewees. Besides fan activities on

social media, other topics such as life as a fan, experiences in the particular community, and the use of social media were also explored during the interviews. Thematic analysis based on a hierarchy was conducted to analyse the data. Concepts that emerged during the transcription of the interviews were noted, which were then classified into categories. The data were sorted into themes and sub-themes to determine patterns (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Subsequently, the patterns from each interviewee transcript were compared and typologies formed. Thereafter, these were related back to concepts and theories from previous studies (Duffet, 2013, 2015).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSSION

Fan practices in pop music fandom: Prosumption and pleasures

A person becomes a fan by first engaging with texts including images, films, people and events (Linden & Linden, 2017). Results reveal that pop music fans move through two levels of engagement. The first level refers to what Grossberg (1992) coined as cognitive/affective engagement. It refers to the initial step where individuals become involved in fandoms. Songs and music videos are common starting points in the pop music fandom. Subsequently, they search for content or news related to the music and the artist, including gossip about their personal life, interview sessions, fun facts, pictures and videos from live shows, and fan fictions. At this level, fans also interpret songs by associating them with their own lives, moods and certain memories, which creates a feeling of strong connection between themselves as fans and the artist. At the second level of engagement, fans discover the importance of joining a fan community, where they can share intersubjective experiences with people who share their interests and passions. In this study, fandom is perceived as a social activity. In fan base communities, fans collectively share, discuss, produce content and integrate media texts into their daily lives (Sullivan, 2012).

Every fan is a prosumer in a fandom. Accordingly, they consume, distribute, comment and reproduce information. Busse and Gray (2011) stated that every exchange of text and conversation between fans creates a fannish space. Consequently, fan texts tend to be intertextual with the social network in which they are produced and circulated. Therefore, rather than assuming that fandom relies on content as a finished product, ongoing practices behind the content were also examined in this study. In accordance with the different types of processes that fans engage in, five categories of prosumption in pop music fandom emerged: informative practices; interpretive practices; transformative works; fan projects; and merchandise. Each category corresponded with different types of pleasures based on Duffett's division (2013, 2015) (Table 1).

Table 1. Prosumption practices and associated pleasures

Prosumption Practices	Definition	Types of Content	Pleasures
Informative practices	Practices of producing, consuming, and sharing knowledge about a fan object (van der Graaf, 2014)	News updates, pictures, videos, songs, social media posts, fun facts	Connection, performance
Interpretive practices	Fans interact with each other to observe connections between circulated texts and discuss their meanings (Sullivan, 2012; van der Graaf, 2014)	Interpretations of songs and videos, discussions on performance.	Connection, performance
Transformative works	Fans create their own texts inspired by interpretations of songs, pictures, videos, etc (Sullivan, 2012; Click & Scott, 2018)	Fan art, fan clip/videos, fan edits, fan fiction, memes, fan cover, fan parody	Appropriation, performance
Fan projects	Fans organise events to build close relationships with each other and/or to support their fan objects	Online projects: Streaming party, voting party, request party. Offline projects: Gathering, meet-ups	Connection, performance
Merchandise	Fans collect things that are considered important as emotional, physical, and financial investments (Shuker, 2005; Santo, 2018)	Official: Albums, t-shirts, posters Fan-made: t-shirts, tote bags, posters, books, wristbands	Performance

Pleasures of connection

Duffett (2014) noted several kinds of intimacy in media. One such is the fans' desire to get closer and to learn more about his or her star and his or her yearning for a real encounter. These pleasures are reflected in fans' informative and interpretive practices. While Duffett referred to autograph hunting and celebrity sighting, the results of the current study reveal the importance of social media in seeking pleasures of connection in today's pop music fan base communities. Performances of intimacy from the star's side, including actively using their verified social media pages to interact with fans, were prevalent. These artists update their daily routines, update their fan base about new projects, and even follow and reply to their messages and mentions in their fan page.

The fans also rely on each other for new content. Twitter is considered a fast and accurate news source. Fans throughout the world are ever-ready to retweet any update as soon as they can. Instagram is employed primarily for visual content such as pictures and videos of idols at events and snippets of their interviews. The Indonesian fan base community curators stated that they get new information mainly from communities in other countries or from fan pages that claim to be global, thus building a network that surpasses geographical boundaries. Subsequently, the local curators re-contextualise any news for members by reposting on the community's pages, translating it into Bahasa Indonesia or mixing it with English, and discussing it in group chats. Sometimes, the curators incorporate jokes about rumours, especially about an artist's love life such as 'Oh, he's actually dating me, not her' and/or advice like, 'As fans, we should respect their personal lives' so as to help other members relate to any new information and lighten the mood. Fans always try to stay connected with their favourite artist.

To connect further with the artist and obtain news/content about them, fans engage in fan gossip (Jenkins, 1992). Indonesian fans often use LINE group chats as group chats in LINE provides them with free space to discuss many things, including an artist's personal life, images and performances, and latest projects. Dedicated fans who have been following an artist's career for years tend to have a certain level of knowledge that they use as a base in these discussions. The personal life of artists such as their relationship history and top news stories about them are used as references to interpret the meaning of songs. In this process, fans migrate from one platform to another to collect various forms of information; these include news websites, Instagram updates, Twitter threads and media interviews. The findings of this study reveal that connecting with fellow fans is a means of pursuing the pleasures of connecting with a favourite artist in the digital era; therefore, the two cannot be separated.

An important factor in forming connection or communication in online groups, is nested in national and international cultures (Baym, 1998). The Indonesian communities include fans from various cities and parts of the country. As noted previously, they also pool information from fans in other countries. They use Bahasa Indonesia with each other but English when interacting with their idols and other fan bases. Through informative and interpretive practices, they learn more about their favourite artist and each other before arriving at a common understanding.

The way fan base communities define and experience connectivity may be linked to the first and second levels of social networks, namely, individual as well as group and organisation relationships (van Dijk, 2006). Fan base communities bring together individuals based on their common interest in an artist and they are supported by the increasing number of social networking sites. Furthermore, moving from more public platforms such as Twitter and Instagram to semi-public platforms like LINE signifies the intensity of their connectivity with both the artist and other members. Subsequently, they expand their network with communities from other countries, thus creating a larger collective fandom, proving that fandoms work simultaneously on a global-local (glocal) scale.

In terms of organisation, fan base communities have their own division of roles. Some fans act as curators who provide information to other community members, manage community projects and collaborate with other communities and influential parties in fandom activities, including labels, media and promoters. This study also reveal that fan base communities are flexible in that any member can participate by sharing information and ideas, which curators sort, give comments and like, as well as get involved in fandom activities.

Fans can also establish a connection with their favourite artist by becoming a loyal supporter. Accordingly, they engage in fan projects, including organising events to celebrate an album release or single anniversary and promoting their idols by creating online streaming parties, boom voting and by requesting sprees. Thus, the role of fans as prosumers currently integrates production, consumption and promotion. This concurs with Yang (2009), who examined *The Corn* fandom that had similar practices. Participation in these fan projects is driven by their awareness of the important role fans play in an artist's career. All the community members perceive that their contribution is important.

> *"...Without fans, there would be no 5SOS. They make these songs and sell albums for people to listen. Some people listen, some stream, buy the album, and voting also matters for their career. It's also the reason why they keep on making music, because they have people who keeps on waiting for them"* (Interviewee Q).

The basic notion of fan projects is for fans to support their idols, enjoy the music they produce and to motivate the artist. When its favourite artist successfully wins an award or claims a top position on the music charts, the fandom experiences pleasure. Fan base communities are not just a network of people who share knowledge and thoughts about the artists they love, but also join forces to pursue a specific shared goal, namely to sustain a artist's career in the industry.

Pleasures of appropriation

Jenkins (2006) noted that fan culture is defined through the appropriation and transformation of materials borrowed from mass culture. Duffett (2013) added that it is the application of folk cultural practices to mass cultural content. Pop music fans also engage in producing, consuming and sharing transformative works, which are usually derived from interpreting and appropriating meaning from songs, pictures and videos of their idols (Click & Scott, 2018; Sullivan, 2012). While some fans share their work on social media, others prefer to keep it to themselves. They derive pleasure in expressing their fascination towards an artist or certain texts rather than distributing their own work to the community. All types of activities and productions that borrow characters or settings from the original works can be referred to as fan art (Yu, 2008; Zaremba, 2011). Fans who engage in fan art are called fan artist.

Fan artists who share their work on social media enjoy the appreciation and recognition of other community members. Even though not all fans are fan artists, these fan-made transformative works are collectively enjoyed by the community as a new source of entertainment. Popular forms of transformative works in pop music fandom include fan arts, parodies, song covers, dance covers, fan videos and meme or reaction pictures. As most works of fans are freely available, others show appreciation through likes and comments as well as reposting and tagging their idol to help the fan artist get noticed. This empowers fan artists to continue creating interesting work pieces.

Some Indonesian fan base communities provide special segments or celebrations on their social media page to accommodate their creative members. *Fifth Harmony Indonesia* has its own hashtag on LINE called #FHIDCreativeChallenge where members can send in song-and-dance covers, funny parodies and fan arts. The curator shared that this section has become one of the most anticipated pieces of content in the community every week. *Shawn Mendes Indonesia* and *Why Don't ID* produce online projects where they compile submissions from members into a video and repost them on Instagram to celebrate their idol's birthday.

Pleasures of performance

The primary pleasure that unites fans during performances is possibly simple enjoyment by engaging, which requires fans to be active in making meaning and participating (Duffett, 2013). The use of social media platforms provides fans with a space to continously express their identity as part of the community. Everything they do on social media may be regarded as a performance. These include: joining in conversations on Twitter, Instagram and LINE; reposting their favourite lyrics; decoding conspiracy theories about songs; exchanging fan art; using hashtags to vote; displaying their merchandise collection; and uploading pictures and videos for the entire world to view. Fans also engage in what Hills (2013) called textual-enunciative productivity, which is a combination of Fiske's enunciative and textual productivity in the digital era. Fans use fandom attributes on their social media pages such as their idol's image as a profile picture and including their idol's name on their screen name.

"There are regular fans … that I would describe as independent, so they don't join in fan groups. But those who are a part of fandom are usually more die-hard, and they stand out in fan groups. For example, they include Avril-related names on their Instagram or Facebook. Besides sharing about their own lives, they also post updates about Avril on their account. Those who are a part of the fandom are more connected on social media. Regular fans only listen to her songs and read news articles, but they don't express it. Fandom are usually more expressive." (Interviewee ND & J).

It is important for fans to constantly depict themselves as proud members of the fan base community. Engaging in these performative practices is their way of showing their dedication and loyalty to their idol. Furthermore, through these activities, fans become more visible and are easily identified by one another and even by people outside of the fandom. Visibility is imperative for defining what it means to be part of a fandom in this social media era. This implies that fandom, comprising fan communities throughout the world, is an emerging social structure. Being a fan of a certain popular culture artist becomes part of one's identity.

If members in the community are active, their community becomes more appealing to other individual fans that have not yet joined. By sharing fast, accurate information, an impression of a trustworthy source is created. The community offers fans a safe space to discuss anything about their idol and make friends. Creative transformative texts offer something new and unique in addition to the official, mass-produced content circulating in the fandom. Therefore, joining fan base communities offer new fannish experiences as well as individual and collective pleasures.

REWARD INDUSTRY: INTERACTION BETWEEN FANS AND MUSIC INDUSTRY

With advances in technology, the participation and engagement of fans becomes more visible to industry practitioners and create a dynamic relationship between the fans and industry (Click & Scott, 2018). This study reveals that social media facilitates fan base communities interaction with at least four components of the music industry: artists, recording labels, media partners, and concert promoters. As noted previously, fans experience pleasures related to their idols. In the context of organised fan base communities however, this goes beyond pleasure. This study reveals that fan base communities operate on a *reward industry,* where fans' dedication to engage in fan practices is driven by expectations for emotional and intangible benefits, which are realised by being able to interact with the industry. Fans consider this as a reward because it affords the community opportunities. The following three types of pleasures are interconnected.

Creating intimacy with artist

The primary reward that fans want most is a closer connection with their favourite artists. The pop stars listed in this present study have social media accounts that they use to interact with their fans. By clicking 'follow' and 'like', commenting and re-tweeting an artist's post, fans demonstrate their desire to get close to and know more about their idols. Furthermore, fans do certain things specifically to acquire the attention of artists. When fans have gatherings, they post pictures and videos on Twitter and Instagram, and tag or mention their idols to make known that there are many dedicated fans in Indonesia. Fans also share transformative works to get an artist to notice them.

> *"On Avril's birthday, we make a video together and mention her so she can see. She had seen our videos several times, and it makes us so happy. … Avril knows we celebrate her birthday, and that makes us happy … because she rarely retweets her fans. She retweeted and replied to ours, so we're glad that she noticed us."*
> (Interviewee N & D).

Competing to be noticed by celebrities on social media is a new form of writing fan mail which has always been a traditional fan practice (Kehrberg, 2015). When a fan actually receives a follow or a reply back, it is perceived as special, and can even result in jealousy among fans. Fans perceive simple social media interactions as a form of intimacy with the artist. However, Frederick, Choong, Clavio, and Walsh (2012) and Stever and Lawson (2013) in their studies deemed these kinds of interactions to be parasocial due to the possibility of different perceptions (Kehrberg, 2015). Fans may view this as an interpersonal relationship while an artist may not feel the same way. Furthermore, interactions from artists are limited because they may not be able to answer/comment on all their fans' messages. In the context where Indonesian fans have to wait for years for their idols' Asian tour, the role of social media in creating intimacy is evident. When these artists actually come to Indonesia, the efforts of fans can be seen during live encounters. Fan base communities often organise fan projects during concerts. For instance, a common project involves community curators preparing an interesting design and uploading it on the community's social media pages for the members to print, or they may distribute them to concertgoers. The purpose for this is for the entire fan base in the audience to raise the printed design in unison during a particular song which has been predetermined by the community curators. Duffett (2014) referred to this as counter-performance.

Subsequently, fans look for feedback such as reactions from their idol on stage or even a social media post afterwards. Some examples of this project done by Indonesian fan bases include the *I Am … Project* during 5SOS' *Sounds Live Feels Live* concert in Jakarta (March 2016) and the *Bridges Project* during Fifth Harmony's *PSA Tour* in Jakarta (March 2018). Both projects got re-posted by the related artists on their social media accounts. This created a whole new meaning of that moment for their local fan base communities.

This reveals how every fan practice may be associated with more than just one type of pleasure. To pursue pleasures of connection, fans also feel the need to appropriate meaning and perform. The way they feel different types of pleasures simultaneously creates a sense of reward. However, being creative and visible are not the only gateways to interact with an artist. Fans can also purchase Meet & Greet passes, which affords them an intimate conversation with their idol. Although not all fans can afford Meet & Greet passes, all community members may experience the pleasures of connection when a fan becomes a representative of their local fan base. A community curator from *Why Don't We ID* met the boyband in Singapore and managed to record

a video greeting from the band members in which they shared their eagerness to come to Indonesia. This was later uploaded on the community's Instagram page and, subsequently generated many happy comments from fans throughout the country. Consequently, the reward became a collective shared feeling of getting noticed.

Working together with a recording label

This study also reveals that fan base communities are affiliated with the regional branch of their artist's recording label whose main responsibilities are to distribute and promote music. Cavicchi (1998) revealed at least two types of fan clubs, namely official fan clubs under the artist's management and unofficial self-organised fan clubs. Similarly, in this study, communities initiated the fan base themselves and subsequently, their activities captured the attention of the recording label, which led to a collaboration in information sharing and assistance with promotion and sales. With social media making fan practices more visible, it gives labels easier access to look for dedicated fan base communities that may prove valuable for their interests.

In fan studies, these cases are usually perceived as exploitation, where media producers or corporations take advantage of free fan labour (McCormick, 2018). However, fans do not view this as a problem as they have a strong emotional attachment to their idol and a driving pleasure to actively engage in fan practices. They may even consider working together with the label as a reward. An example includes the collaboration between the label and communities to promote and sell CDs. While the label makes a profit, the fans can fulfil their mission of being loyal supporters and support their idol's commercial success. Rather than feeling exploited, fans enjoy the pleasures of performance by participating and contributing to their favourite artist's career. Further, having connections with recording labels makes fans feel more included in the industry.

Fan base communities may have ideas on how to promote a single or album, and subsequently initiate contact with the label representative to suggest the fan projects they have in mind. The label's support may vary from giving free official promotional materials to sponsoring fan events. While these may be considered as tangible or material rewards, fans perceive it from an emotional perspective rather than its economic value. Labels also can help fans sustain their fan practices, such as providing a meeting space for a fan gathering or photo booth props. Further, working together with a label can help the fan base acquire more exposure in the general public. This may include promoting fan events and projects, which can attract more people to join the community. Furthermore, the label's involvement can also help the community to get noticed by their idol, which refers to the pleasure of connection.

> *"We make fan base to show that we exist and we want to see the artist. That's why it's beneficial to work together with Universal, because they help promote our projects. Ever since we held that release party, Shawn has noticed Indonesia several times, greeting "Hi Indonesia" on Instagram Live. So, he knows (that he has a lot of fans in) Indonesia, who knows if it increases the chance of him going on tour here."* (Interviewee DZ).

If there is more than one fan base community in a country for an artist, a community's affiliation with the label may form its distinctive feature, indicating that it is the more official community that has exclusive access to the artist. However, different communities do join in supporting a bigger label-supported fan project. This is beneficial for the fans as they are able to meet new people who share the same fandom. Therefore, fan practices are not only fuelled by

pleasures, but also social ties and a sense of belonging with people who share the same passion as a fundamental motivation and reward for fandom (D'Amato, 2014). Besides seeking intimacy with the idol and participating in the industry, bonding between others who share the same interest is also an intimacy which fans look for.

According to van Dijk (2006), face-to-face communication remains the most important kind of communication in a network society. Community curators may be required to attend meetings with label representatives to discuss details of fan gatherings. While the communities studied in this study have Indonesia clearly highlighted in their names, and therefore represent a nationwide fandom, four out of the five communities have at least one curator based in the Greater Jakarta region. This can be attributed to the fact that Jakarta is at the core of the entertainment industry because it is the designated venue for most international concerts and the home of well-known companies representing global artists. Consequently, most offline label-supported fan activities are also held in Jakarta.

While this may prove to be an obstacle for fans in other cities, social media helps each member to participate in various ways regardless of where they live. Community members from cities such as Bandung, Karawang, Medan and Palembang have organised small meet-ups of their own in their areas, which they share on the community page and group chats.

Mutual partnership with media

This study also proves that mass media channels such as television, radio and online media form partnerships with fan base communities. In some cases, this is part of a recording label's marketing activities where they organise an on-air listening party and invite fan base community members. However, partnerships generally begin with a high level of engagement and participation with radio stations by fan base members. When they go on a mass request spree or vote on radio charts via social media, their enthusiasm becomes more visible to radio stations. In return, radio stations engage with these communities by including knowledge, comments and reactions of fans as part of their content whenever something new about the artist emerges.

With a mutual relationship between radio stations and fan base communities, radio programmes are able to acquire a more engaged audience and interesting content material from fans. In return, the community acquires more exposure and a public platform to talk about their idol to the general public. Interactions between media partners and fan base communities include live shoutouts such as '*This song got many requests from our friends in fan base community*', contacting community curators regarding new updates to acquire fans' insights as well as inviting community members to speak about their activities on the radio live. Through these activities, the reputation of a community as a source of information for those interested in a certain artist is enhanced. Furthermore, the enthusiastic engagement of fans with the media can also inspire many beneficial activities for the fans, such as merchandise giveaways and free concert tickets / contests. Prambors FM, a national radio station, was often mentioned by the interviewees when discussing this matter.

Additionally, there is a music programme called *Breakout* on the national TV network, NET, that is known for its good relationships with fan base communities. Fans can request music videos or songs through the show's Twitter and Instagram accounts. The show has also invited communities who have actively engaged with the show to be guest stars on special episodes. *Little Black Stars Indonesia, 5SOS Indonesia* and *Why Don't We ID* are among the fan bases that have appeared on the show in 2014, 2015 and 2019, respectively. They promoted their idols, shared information about their fandom life and habits, spoke about the community activities, sang along

and played trivia games. When the episodes were aired, they became online events for their members throughout the country as they watched together the live stream. During the shows, fans shared the excitement of seeing their friends and watching a full hour of their idols' music on social media. In relation to online media, the interviewees mentioned *CreativeDisc.com*, a music weblog and online store that is always open to collaborating with fan base communities. When communities host a gathering or release party, *CreativeDisc.com* provides official CDs for early online pre-orders or sales during the event while also helping to promote the event on their website. This is rewarding for the community as it helps them to increase the artist's sales and ensure the participation of many fans. Having a media partner also means having a trustworthy source to obtain important fan-related news including potential Indonesian tours.

Accordingly, fans not only occupy space on social media, but also participate in mainstream media. They have a sense of connection with the media as one of the important channels in their engagement with their idol and the pleasure of performing as fans to mass audiences. The media being open to collaborating with active fans can lead to a positive representation of fandom as it views fandom as a powerful and passionate group of people who exert an influence on the industry (Bennett, 2018).

Concert promoters and fans' expectations

Live concerts are one of the most awaited moments for diehard fans, especially in light of global pop stars who usually do not include Asia as part of their tours. Fan base communities have to convince related parties such as the artist's management company that there are a lot of fans in the country. Consequently, they embark on fan projects using hashtags, spamming promoters and working together with labels and media to be visible. Their dedication in the process may interest concert promoters in a collaboration to promote and sell tickets. In fact, sometimes, the communities offer their help to the promoters.

The fans' eagerness to help promoters is usually not driven by economic motives such as getting paid a portion of the sales profit. Fans are usually motivated by the expectation of rewards related to pleasures of connection such as exclusive access to information, free tickets, airport welcoming and a chance to meet their idols in person. Duffett (2014) stressed that face-to-face encounters with idols are precious, meaningful moments for fans. Fans understand that only concert promoters have the power to make their wishes come true; as such, they are willing to do anything. Naturally, a fan base community is disappointed when they feel that, despite having have done so much to help the promoters, their expectations of rewards are not met. For example, the curators of *Fifth Harmony Indonesia* were asked to help to sell official tickets to fellow Harmonizers. In return, they hoped the promoters would give them special treatment but they received the same treatment as regular audiences, which was no free or discounted tickets, Meet & Greet passes or even early entry to the venue. Instead, the reward that they received was more related to work experience instead of the pleasure of connection as anticipated. The community curators were invited to the initial press conference to announce the confirmation of the concert, help organise fans to welcome the girl group at the airport, and directly suggest official rules of the concert to the promoters.

CONCLUSION

An audience's ability to engage with content is now possible through media convergence, which means it is also influenced by industry and technology. This study looked at how social media accommodates fandom. Social media facilitates and intensifies fan practices, where fans can consume and produce content as well as interact with one another to form a fan base community. Furthermore, this study confirms that social media is crucial for fans to interact with industry components which are considered important and beneficial for their community.

Besides being active consumers and producers of content, this study also confirms that fans also engage in intangible exchanges. Fans are dedicated people with a strong emotional attachment with their idol and fan base community. Therefore, they engage in fan practices to pursue pleasures of connecting with the idol, appropriate the meaning of texts and proudly perform their identity as members of the community. These pleasures create desires and expectations for fans to acquire benefits that further fulfil their emotional needs.

In this study, the reward industry refers to how fans expect reciprocity from their idol and related parties through rewards or treatments that are considered important in their fandom. The highest reward for fans is an encounter with their idols which in many cases requires support from other parties, including the recording label, mass media and concert promoters. Other things considered as rewards include support for fan events, exclusive news and information and exposure for the community in the general public.

In order to claim these rewards, fan base communities exert their existence on social media platforms, such as Twitter and Instagram, to grab the attention of their favourite artist and related industry practitioners. In accordance with the concept of the reward industry, fan base community members support each other individually and collectively to reach a shared goal such as inviting as many people as they can to join the fandom, making the artist more famous and successful in Indonesia, and getting noticed by the artist. The fan base community becomes a home for fans to participate by engaging in their own preferred way of prosumption, including informative practices, interpretive practices, transformative works, fan projects and merchandise. By being enthusiastic and active when engaging in these fan practices, fan base communities become more visible and, therefore, increase their chances of getting the rewards they desire.

Fans also desire inclusion. In the era of media convergence and digital media where users can be active prosumers, fans do not want to be just spectators but engage with the texts with which they are intrigued. In this context of pop music fandom, fans want their idol to be a part of their lives and actually do something significant in the industry. They do this by participating in social media, more specifically through the formation of fan base communities. They use these platforms as opportunities to expand their network with people in the media industry. It is noteworthy that the fandom is not only about passionate individuals, but can encompass potential relationships and cooperation with the industry practitioners and decision-makers, whether for a single project or a long-term relationship. Therefore, this development has re-configured how the pop music industry currently works by incorporating as many players as possible, including artists, recording labels, artists' management, media corporations, concert organisers and fans.

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