



Netnography of The Linkages Between Celebrity Worship and Impulsive Buying on a Treasure Album Product

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Abstract: The Korean Wave has become a prevailing trend around the world in recent years. Many people has begun to recognize South Korean culture through movies, drama series, and music. South Korea has its own music genre called Korean Pop as known as K-Pop. One of the most popular K-Pop groups in Indonesia is Treasure. The purpose of this research is to discover and explore the linkages between celebrity worship and impulsive buying of Treasure album products by fans. Using a descriptive qualitative method with a netnographic approach. Therefore, this study observed the behavior, discussion, and interaction of Treasure fans on Twitter. Especially on @ygent_official and @treasuremenfess accounts. The results of this study found that celebrity worship and impulsive buying are closely related, as enthusiastic fans welcome their idol groups who release new albums after a long hiatus. Fans who did impulsive buying are mostly fans who pre-order spontaneously without planning.

Keywords: Celebrity Worship, Impulsive Buying, Treasure's Fans.

Introduction

In recent years, the Korean Wave has become a trend that has been spreading around the world (Reditya 2021). The culture of South Korea is recognized by many people through films, drama series, and also in terms of music. South Korea has its own music genre, namely Korean Pop or commonly referred to as K-Pop. K-Pop music lovers already have many communities in the world, even in Indonesia. Based on data from Tempo taken from research conducted by Twitter, the topic of K-Pop is the most discussed topic. From 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021, there were around 7.5 billion tweets related to K-Pop. The number broke the record a year earlier which only reached 6.1 billion tweets shown in Figure 1 (Javier 2021).

In Figure 2 below, Twitter notes that of the 7.5 billion tweets about K-Pop in the 2020-2021 period, Indonesia is at the top of the list with the highest number of K-Pop fans on Twitter, followed by Japan, Philippines, South Korea, The United States, and others (Javier 2021).



Figure 1. 20 Countries with the Most K-Popers on Twitter 2020-2021

One of the K-Pop idol groups currently popular among teenagers is Treasure, a boy group formed by YG Entertainment through the survival program YG Treasure Box in 2018 (Annisa 2020). Treasure's increasing popularity over time has made the group's name included in the Top 10 Most-Mentioned K-Pop Artist 2020 list on Twitter. Alongside the names of its senior groups that have debuted several years earlier and are better known to the general public, such as BTS, BLACKPINK, NCT, EXO, Twice, and so on. Shown in Figure 3 as below (Kim 2021).

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Figure 2. Top 10 Most-Mentioned K-Pop Artist in the World

The existence of K-Pop groups cannot be separated from their music works, which are certain that in addition to releasing songs digitally on official music platforms, they will also release physical albums. Fans of K-Pop groups who are already known to be loyal to their idols, will usually flock to buy the album as support for their idol group. Even if the album is only sold in South Korea, it does not prevent fans from increasing the number of sales of their idol's physical album by participating in pre-orders.

According to Vividia et al., (2020), celebrity worship can be defined as a form of relationship that occurs in only one direction and there is a form of worship between individuals and their idol celebrities, where the individual can be obsessed with their idol celebrities. According to Maharani & Rahmasari (2022), each individual has a sense of liking or love for their idol in different ways which then leads to excessive worship. An individual's admiration and love for their idol celebrity can affect their shopping behavior (Sari, Fianiyanti, and Yuliadi 2022), fulfilling needs when being part of a fan group cannot be separated from consumption practice.

Impulsive purchases are usually described as very spontaneous purchasing activities or taking ownership of products without deeper thought (Farid and Ali 2018). Individuals who make impulsive purchases are those who are usually easily emotionally connected to products that they feel will make them feel satisfied if they can buy the product at that time. Impulsive buying does not always end in satisfaction, because sometimes individuals who make impulsive purchases usually regret making decisions so quickly and wasting their money.

Before this, there were researchers who conducted similar research, including research conducted by Asrie & Misrawati (2020), concluding that celebrity worship has a significant effect on impulsive buying on BTS idol merchandise, which shows that celebrity worship and impulsive buying are closely related. Another similar study, namely by Tyoni & Syarifah (2022), concluded that celebrity worship and self-esteem with impulsive buying have a fairly strong effect on each other. Based on this background, the purpose of this research is to

discover and explore the linkages between celebrity worship and impulsive buying of Treasure album products by fans.

Method

This research uses descriptive qualitative research in order to describe and explore various alternatives in solving problems related to celebrity worship and impulsive buying by Treasure fans. The approach used is the netnography approach. Netnography is a special type of ethnography (Bakry 2017). Netnography is another term for ethnography that specializes in the study of online cultures and communities. Compared to conventional ethnography, netnography tries to restore the human element to a highly localized and immaterial experience.

The data sources used in this research consist of two kinds, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through a netnography approach, so that researchers made observations about Treasure fan interactions on Twitter, especially on @ygent_official and @treasuremenfess accounts. Then secondary data is obtained indirectly. Sourced from book literature, scientific journals, research results, and other sources.

Some of data collection techniques used in this research are first by making observations, second by literature study, and third by documentation, which is a data collection technique used in social research methodology to trace historical data. Meanwhile, the data collection tools used in this research are gadgets in the form of smartphones and laptops which are used as authentic evidence of research activities.

Result and Discussion

The results of this study found that Treasure fans who were observed interacting on Twitter on the @ygent_official account and also @treasuremenfess had several similarities and differences in their celebrity worship behavior, which triggered impulsive buying behavior for Treasure album products.

According to Vividia et al., (2020), celebrity worship is defined as a form of relationship that occurs in one direction and there is a form of worship between individuals and their idol celebrities, where the individual can be obsessed with their idol celebrities. Based on a research article by Emmanuella (2020), there are several levels of celebrity worship, including entertainment social, intense personal, and borderline pathological.

Previous research conducted by Fitriana (2019), stated that celebrity worship can be influenced by self-control. This means that the higher the self-control

possessed by a fan, the lower the celebrity worship of his idol will be. Vice versa, if a fan's self-control is low, then celebrity worship of his idol will be higher.

According to Karomah (2018), one of the factors that influence celebrity worship is the gender factor. This study found that the majority of female fans express their love for their favorite idols on social media, especially Twitter. It also proves that female fans tend to idolize men.

In line with previous research by Maharani & Rahmasari (2022), based on the results of interviews with four participants, all of whom were women, found that the reason a fan is interested in idolizing a K-Pop idol group is because the idols' faces look handsome. So that it becomes someone's attraction to an idol group.

Researchers found Treasure fans who express their likes or love just like they express their love to the closest people such as family, relatives, or the most successful people in the real world. Celebrity worship is a behavior of attachment to their idols that occurs starting from an interest in small things done by idols so that it can turn into an obsession. So that it is because of this celebrity worship attitude that influences the emergence of impulsive buying of album products by Treasure fans.

Based on the research findings, it shows that there are fans who make impulsive buying which is categorized into two types, namely fans who purely purchase Treasure albums without planning in advance. This happens after fans see information about the album design and pre-order information shared by the agency's official account. So after seeing this information, fans feel like buying and owning the album. Then fans who had previously held back the desire to immediately buy or pre-order, but were thwarted by the information shared by the agency. So it looks as if the fan seems to be reminded again about the pre-order of the Treasure album with a certain time limit.

According to Nugraha et al., (2021), consumer behavior is divided into two types, namely rational consumer behavior and irrational consumer behavior. Treasure fans who engage in impulsive buying fall into the irrational type of consumer behavior. When viewed from the characteristics of irrational behavior, Treasure fans have met these criteria. As Treasure fans are very easily tempted by advertisements and promotions shared by Treasure's official agency on its social media account pages. Then Treasure fans also decide to buy products not because they are based on needs, but because they just want to fulfil their desires.

This study found that Treasure fans indicated impulsive buying spontaneously, where they made the decision to pre-order very quickly and without seeking further information after the Treasure agency shared

information about the album design and pre-order on the agency's official Twitter account.

According to Koswanto (2020), human behavior can be divided into two, namely reflexive behavior and non-reflexive behavior. Impulsive buying with this spontaneity indicator falls into the reflexive behavior category. Because reflexive behavior is behavior that is caused by a spontaneous reaction to an existing stimulus. In this study, the stimulus in question is like an agency that releases information related to pre-ordering Treasure's latest album on the agency's official account on Twitter. The stimulus caused a reaction in fans in the form of making a decision to pre-order as soon as possible.

When associated with aspects that identify impulsive buying behavior (Karomah 2018), Treasure fans fall into several categories, namely the tendency of Treasure fans to make purchases because when they see items they like, they will immediately decide to buy. Then Treasure fans also have the desire or motivation to purchase albums. The motivation in question here comes from the Treasure group itself. In addition, Treasure fans who pre-order albums enjoy their shopping activities and feel satisfied with what they have bought.

Impulsive buying is usually described as a very spontaneous purchasing activity or taking ownership of a product without deeper thought. Usually, impulsive buyers feel satisfied after making a purchase and successfully owning the desired item because they feel they cannot refuse not to make a purchase. But on the other hand impulsive buying does not always end in satisfaction, because sometimes individuals who make impulsive purchases usually regret making decisions so quickly and wasting their money.

In addition to finding Treasure fans who pre-ordered albums spontaneously and suddenly, this research also found that there were Treasure fans who felt unable to resist buying Treasure albums as soon as possible and some of them ended up with dissatisfaction from the fans themselves. This happened because of fans' impatience in making considerations to make decisions.

Based on a research article by Sitanggang & Sitanggang (2021), consumer behavior as a whole is a decision-making process by individuals who show actions in the form of activities to find, buy, use, evaluate, and spend product use value. However, Treasure fans who make impulsive purchases make purchases without doing a deeper search for information beforehand. So that these fans immediately decided to buy album products armed with information related to pre-orders only without knowing what the contents and benefits were when they bought the album.

Therefore, some of the fans do not think about the impact that will come in the future. When associated with aspects of impulsive buying, Treasure fans fall into the post-purchased category, where an impulsive buyer feels regret after buying. This is characterized by being in a bad mood and expressing these feelings through action. In this case, the action in question is by sending a protest directly to the Treasure agency's official account.

Based on the observations that have been made, many of Treasure's fans make impulsive buying because of their love for their idol, Treasure. Some of them do not care about the cost of the album product offered, as long as they feel satisfied because they contributed to the success of their idol's comeback by buying the album.

The results of this study are not much different from the results of previous research by Asrie & Misrawati (2020), who examined celebrity worship and impulsive buying in BTS fans. The study concluded that celebrity worship has a significant effect on impulsive buying on BTS merchandise. This shows that, although the object studied in the study is different from previous studies, the results obtained are the same.

In 2018, research was conducted by Yu Jin Kim et al in Korea to find out about consumer behavior on K-Pop idol merchandise (Jin, Jieun, and Miyoung 2018). Based on the results of the research conducted, it was found that K-Pop fans are divided into three categories when viewed based on total annual expenditure, namely low-level consumers, middle-level consumers and upper-level consumers. In low-level consumers, the majority make purchasing decisions based on price and features offered as considerations. While high-level consumers, most of their purchasing decisions are based on the limited production of merchandise which results in scarcity in the future.

Conclusion

Celebrity worship by Treasure fans is interrelated with impulsive buying behaviour on Treasure albums. This happens because fans feel enthusiastic about welcoming their idol group who released a new album after a long vacuum. So to support the success of Treasure's comeback, fans chose to take action to pre-order immediately. Fans who are indicated to do impulsive buying are mostly fans who pre-order spontaneously without planning in advance and without considering other factors, as well as fans who pre-order because they cannot resist not making the decision to pre-order immediately without thinking about the impact that will come in the future.

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