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K-Pop Fandom Activism on Social Media: Refuting Accusations of Slacktivism in Internet Activism

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Abstract:

K-Pop fandom activism, which has been considered as a mere fanaticism movement, has experienced a developmental orientation towards the fulfillment of common interests. K-Pop fandom activism is able to become a movement in social media that has an impact and brings public attention in voicing social changes. This study examines the trends, forms, and real implications of social movements initiated by K-Pop fandoms with a high number of masses and militants. Using qualitative research utilizing online sources, this study found that K-Pop fandom activism has enlivened issues that are not only related to their community but have referred to global issues such as social, cultural, environmental and political. This activism is able to become a catalyst on social media in the form of real action rather than slacktivism. Real action is carried out by giving donations, filling out petitions to make demonstration efforts. This activism phenomenon has implications for changes not only in the issues raised but also has implications for changes in the stigma of society towards K-Pop fandom which tends to be more positive as a driver of social change. However, this paper is limited to the use of text data as the main source which cannot provide empirical conclusions. Therefore, future research should integrate the views and experiences of those directly involved in K-Pop fandom activism so that it is possible to formulate more comprehensive conclusions.

Keywords: *Activism, K-Pop Fandom, Social Media, Slactivism*

Abstrak:

Fenomena aktivisme fandom K-Pop yang selama ini dianggap sebagai gerakan fanatisme belaka ternyata telah mengalami perkembangan orientasi atas pemenuhan kepentingan bersama. Aktivisme fandom K-Pop mampu menjadi gerakan dalam media sosial yang berdampak dan membawa atensi publik dalam menyuarakan perubahan-perubahan sosial. Tulisan ini fokus menganalisis tren, bentuk, dan implikasi nyata dari gerakan sosial yang diinisiasi oleh fandom K-Pop dengan jumlah massa yang cukup tinggi dan militan. Menggunakan penelitian kualitatif dengan memanfaatkan sumber-sumber online, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa aktivisme fandom K-Pop sudah meramaikan isu-isu yang bukan hanya terkait komunitas mereka saja melainkan sudah merujuk pada isu-isu global seperti sosial, kultural, lingkungan hingga politik. Aktivisme ini mampu menjadi katalis di media sosial berupa aksi nyata bukan sebagai slacktivisme. Aksi nyata yang dilakukan dengan pemberian donasi, mengisi petisi hingga melakukan upaya demonstrasi. Fenomena aktivisme ini berimplikasi pada perubahan tidak hanya pada isu yang diangkat melainkan juga berimplikasi pada perubahan stigma masyarakat terhadap fandom K-Pop yang cendrung lebih positif sebagai penggerak perubahan sosial. Akan tetapi, tulisan ini terbatas pada penggunaan data teks yang menjadi sumber utama yang tidak dapat memberikan kesimpulan

empiris. Oleh karena itu, penelitian masa depan harus mengintegrasikan pandangan dan pengalaman pihak yang terlibat langsung dalam aktivisme fandom K-Pop sehingga memungkinkan untuk merumuskan kesimpulan yang lebih komprehensif.
Kata Kunci: *Aktivisme, Fandom K-Pop, Media Sosial, Slactivisme*

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Introduction

Technological developments have accommodated changes in the realm of aspiration and criticism. Social media is no longer just a medium of communication and information but also a new space for social movements and activism. Some forms of activism recorded on social media have proven to be able to gather the masses and have an impact on the desired changes (Ta'amneh & Al-Ghazo, 2021; Brown, 2021; Dobrin, 2020). For example, the social restriction movement implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic through the use of the hashtag #dirumahsaja (Nadia & Irwansyah, 2021), rejection of the Job Creation Bill (Arianto, 2021; Lia, 2021), and to efforts to encourage public sensitivity to the rejection of reclamation policies (Anam et al., 2020). Social media has become a strategic space for activism movements due to its high and massive usage. Hootsuite We Are Social data shows that the number of active social media users in Indonesia reached 191 million as of January 2022 (Mahdi & Bayu, 2022). This number has increased by 12.6%, representing an increase of 21 million people compared with the previous year (Nuryama, 2022).

Previous research on activism in the digital realm does not accommodate movements specifically designed by certain communities or social groups. Existing studies tend to discuss digital activism in general, such as studies that look at the efficiency of social media in driving activism (Wong & Wright, 2018 ; Foster et al., 2019; Larrondo et al., 2019; Yessenbekova, 2020), the negative aspects and limitations of social media in facilitating activism, which is often regarded merely as a form of social engagement expressed through support or opposition, without affecting specific social issues (Cook et al., 2014; Wilkins et al., 2019), and further studies that actually refute the accusations of slacktivism in previous research (Christensen, 2012; Kwak et al., 2018). From these previous studies, it appears that activism in the social media is often seen as a tentative social movement that does not accommodate change.

Based on the above background, this article aims to complement existing studies on social media activism that has an impact and accommodates change. Social movements recorded in digital media need to be seen in a smaller and exclusive scope such as interest-based virtual communities in the form of K-Pop fan clubs (fandoms). In quantity, this community has a fairly high and militant mass. Those who are members of the K-Pop fandom are also known to have a high sense of loyalty. Based on that aspect, this study aims to examine the trend of social movements carried out by K-Pop fandom, the forms of activism, and the impact or implications of activism that takes place on social media. The phenomenon of this kind of activism becomes a new perspective in viewing fandom as a social community that is not just present as a

pop community that is attached to the stigma of fanaticism, but instead becomes a group of social change drivers.

This study departs from the argument that social media activism mediated by K-Pop fan groups can create change. Movements that were originally initiated by the motive of similar interests and closely related to the fulfillment of fan interests gradually became actions that were fully based on the intentions of fulfilling common interests. K-Pop fandom, which is quantitatively large and solid, has the power to initiate social movements. Although the activism carried out has not been able to fully challenge the ruling status and fundamentally change the social order, the movements initiated by the K-Pop music fan community are able to attract the attention of audiences from various backgrounds and levels to get involved and voice their demands. The movements exist not only in the virtual sphere but also in the form of donations to street actions, which may have a more or less significant impact on change.

Method

K-pop fandoms, as communities of fans who idolize a particular K-pop idol or group, is an interesting object in socio-cultural studies. The selection of K-Pop fandom as a unit of analysis is based on two main reasons. First, K-Pop fandom is not only present as a representation of interest-based groups or communities but also exists in social movement activities that address important issues in the socio-cultural, political, economic, and environmental domains. Second, the number of people who identify as members of the K-pop fandom on social media is known to be relatively high. This is evident in data indicating that Indonesia has the largest number of K-pop fans in cyberspace, surpassing South Korea, the country of origin of Hallyu culture and K-pop idols themselves (CNN Indonesia, 2022). These two reasons indicate that K-pop fandom is an important unit of analysis for examining its existence and influence in interrogating social phenomena, including activism.

This qualitative study collects data through internet research, including online news reports, social media posts, and official websites containing relevant surveys related to K-pop fandom activism on social media. Internet-based research was selected because it enables access to rich data from internet-mediated sources, such as online news reports, social media posts, and websites. In particular, one of the principal data sources in this study is the survey results published on the Drone Emprit website. This data were selected because they comprise monitoring and analysis of netizen conversations and news trending on social media, based on keywords, names of public figures, and event names. The results of Drone Emprit's monitoring and analysis help this study identify trends and provide statistics on the phenomenon of K-pop fandom activism on social media.

The social media platform used as the primary data source in this study is Twitter. Twitter was selected because it is one of the most widely used platforms among K-pop fans for virtual interaction, both with their favorite artists and with fellow fandom members. Twitter report data indicate that, from July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021, tweets about K-pop became the most discussed topic and set a record, reaching 7.5 billion tweets (Kim, 2021). Of this total, Indonesia is known to be the country with the highest number of users in the world. This underscores the relevance of researching the activism of Indonesian K-pop fandoms on Twitter.

Data collection was conducted by searching online news sources and Twitter posts. Data collection from online news was conducted by entering relevant keywords into the Google search engine, such as "Drone Emprit data on K-popers' activism," to access the news website https://pers.droneemprit.id/, which contains Drone Emprit's analysis of tweets from K-pop-related Twitter accounts. The data are included in the first finding of this research which focuses on the trends and statistics of K-pop fandom activism on social media. In addition, Google searches also included the keywords "Kpopers care," "Kpopers donate," and "the power of K-popers on social media" to address the third data requirement regarding the implications of activism. Furthermore, data in the form of Twitter posts was obtained by entering relevant keywords such as "K-pop", "K-popers", "K-popers donation", and "Kpop joins demonstration" in the "search" feature. The search was also conducted by targeting trending hashtags such as #BlackLivesMatter, #MosiTidakPercaya, #TolakOmnibusLaw, #SavePapuaForest, #SaveHutanIndonesia, and special hashtags such as #KpopersTurunkeJalan and #KpopersPeduli. The series of data were then identified and classified into the second finding which explains about the forms of activism.

The data findings were then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman analysis method (Miles et al., 2014). Data analysis was conducted in three stages. First, data reduction involved grouping the findings into appropriate themes, such as trends and statistics of K-pop fandom activism on social media, forms of activism, and the implications of activism. Second, data display was presented in the form of tables containing image snippets, quotations from Twitter posts, and news descriptions supported by explanatory narration below the tables. Third, data verification involved re-examining the authenticity and relevance of the data in relation to the research theme. Through these three stages of analysis, this study makes an important academic contribution by producing reliable data.

Results and Discussion

Result

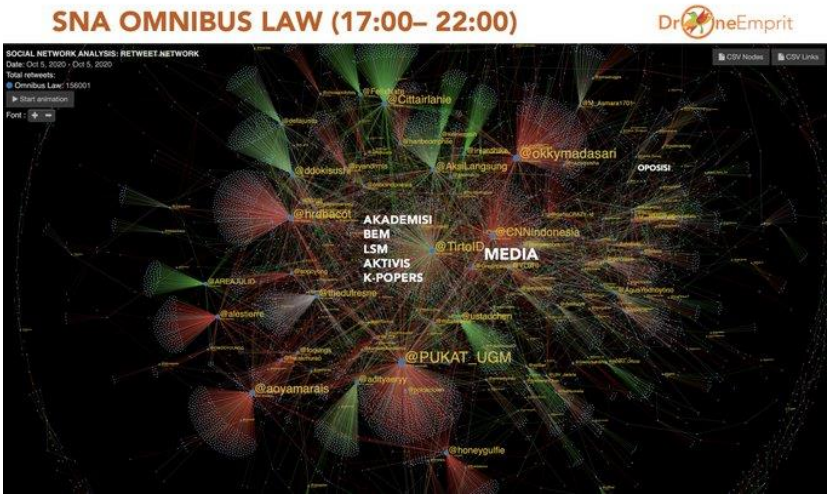
Trends and Statistics of K-Pop Fandom Activism on Social Media

K-pop fandom activism has increasingly become a prominent phenomenon in virtual spaces, mainly through diverse narratives and forms of action. Once primarily focused on supporting their favorite idols and music groups, these fandoms have expanded their activities to engage in various social and political issues. Social media platforms, particularly Twitter, no longer serve merely as a medium for communication, a source of entertainment, or information sharing but have transformed into new arenas for social activism. Using their significant online presence, K-pop fans mobilize to raise awareness and initiate action on issues ranging from racial justice to climate change. The intensity of K-pop fandom activism is evident through the high engagement of Twitter accounts that display K-pop avatars (ava or profile pictures), which participate in ongoing online discussions and trending topics. These fans often organize campaigns, such as mass donations, trending hashtags, and spreading educational content, challenging the notion that online activism is merely "slacktivism." Instead, they demonstrate the potential for virtual communities to make real-world impacts. Whether it be amplifying marginalized voices or contributing to humanitarian causes, K-pop fandom activism has proven to be an influential force,

leveraging the power of social media to transcend entertainment and engage in meaningful social movements.

Most of the issues that show massive involvement from K-Popers are issues related to politics and statehood such as the discourse on the rejection of the Omnibus Law that occurred in Indonesia as can be seen in the following figure:

Figure 1
Social Network Analysis of the Omnibus Law Contra Cluster



Source: Twitter Account @ismailfahmi

The Drone Emprit data above shows the rejection trend present on Twitter through the keyword "Omnibus Law" which is dominated by several social media users. Data from the trends24 website notes that two hashtags related to the issue of rejection of the Omnibus Law that lasted a long time and even became trending topics worldwide were #MosiTidakPercaya and #TolakOmnibusLaw. These rejection hashtags appeared since October 4, 2020 at 17.00 WIB and peaked on October 5, 2020 at 21.00 WIB with 56,000 mentions (Ludwianto & Fikrie, 2020). K-Popers with diverse fandom backgrounds are known to be one of the largest clusters that have contributed to increasing the trending rejection of the Omnibus Law. This can also be seen in the following image regarding the compilation of Twitter profile photos (ava) which are dominated by K-Pop photos:

Figure 2
Avatars (Profile Photos) of Twitter Top Influencers Involved in the Action Against the Omnibus Law

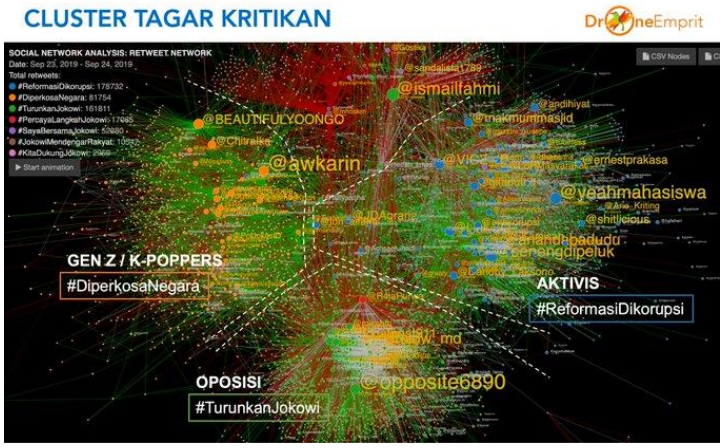




From the Figure 2 above compilation of avatars (profile pictures) of the top and most influential accounts in enlivening the Omnibus Law reject trend, it can be seen that accounts with K-Popers avatars dominate. Of the total 144 accounts summarized, at least 40 of them are accounts with K-Pop avatars. Meanwhile, the remaining accounts feature personal profile photos, memes, news media logos, and similar images. When grouped by category, these accounts are fewer in number than those using K-pop fans' profile photos.

The existence of K-Pop fandom in activism on Twitter is also found in the trend of criticizing the government and the House of Representatives. These criticisms are present in several trending hashtags such as #ReformasiDikorupsi, #TurunkanJokowi, and #DiperkosaNegara. The Social Network Analysis (SNA) map in figure 4.3 below shows that of all the Twitter accounts that trended these hashtags, the counter-government cluster pattern is divided into three categories: GenZ/K-Popers, Activists, and Opposition. A map of the social network analysis that shows these counter clusters can be seen in the following figure:

Figure 3
Social Network Analysis (SNA) Data on Twitter User Clusters that Criticize the Government



The GenZ and K-Popers clusters dominate the posts using the hashtag #DiperkosaNegara. A post from the Twitter account @BEAUTIFULYOONGO is a post that represents the K-Popers group. The post from the K-Popers account even ranked as the top influencer post, surpassing posts from other prominent influencer accounts such as @awkarin, @chitralka, @yogacaesarekaa, and @JDAgraria. If the top influencer accounts are compared, the @BEATIFULYOONGO account has a much smaller number of followers, which is only 133 followers compared to the @awkarin account as the second top influencer with a total of 372 thousand followers. However, the post with the hashtag #DiperkosaNegara shared by the @BEAUTIFULYOONGO account received 11,491 engagements, 204 more engagements than @awkarin's post which received 11,287 engagements (Fahmi, 2019). The data shows that not only account reputation seen from the number of followers has an effect on the achievement of posts, but reputation in terms of account identity as part of the K-Pop group has proven successful in reaching a higher number of engagements.

Forms of Activism

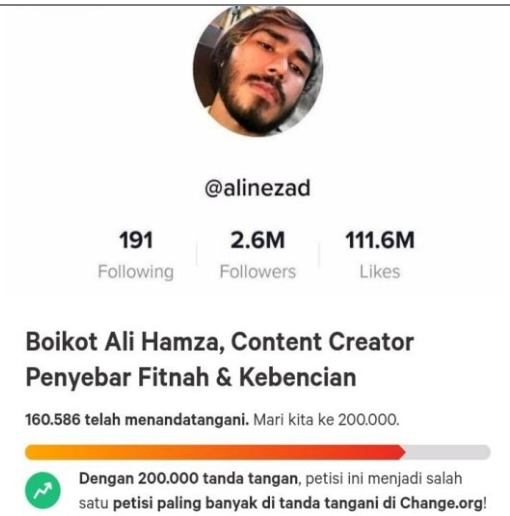
K-pop fandom activism is not only reflected in the size of trends or statistical data that capture the participation of K-pop fans in socio-political issues but also in concrete

cases documented across social media platforms. Once primarily a tool for communication, information sharing, and entertainment, social media has evolved into a significant space where social movements can take shape and thrive. Within these virtual spaces, K-pop fandom activism manifests in three essential forms: discourse, donation, and direct action. First, discourse is seen in how K-pop fans use platforms to discuss important social and political topics, often amplifying marginalized voices. Second, donations are a notable form of activism, where fans collectively fundraise for various causes, from disaster relief to social justice campaigns. Lastly, the action includes organizing real-world protests or mobilizing large-scale online movements, such as coordinating hashtags to bring global attention to critical issues. Through these efforts, K-pop fans actively challenge accusations of "slacktivism" by demonstrating that their online presence can lead to tangible social change. The three forms of K-Pop fandom activism can be seen in the following table:

Table 1
Froms of K-Pop Fandom Activism on Social Media

No	Form of Activism	Evidence	Category	Source
1	Discourse	After spending days urging social media support for the Black Lives Matter movement, fans around the world went viral and gained mainstream media attention for their use of K-pop fancams to jam police apps.	Support for the #BlackLivesMatter movement	https://www.vox.com
		A boycott petition against Ali Hamza's Tiktok account is being discussed on social media Twitter. The call to boycott Ali Hamza was echoed by netizens who were dominated by K-Popers because the content he published on Tiktok was considered to have spread slander and hatred.	Content creator boycott	https://kabar24.bisnis.com
		The hot issue of rejecting the Omnibus Law on Job Creation (RUU Ciptaker) has made K-Popers join the Omnibus Law trend on Twitter.	Raise the hashtags #MotionNoTrust and #RefuseOmnibusLaw	https://www.cnnindonesia.com
		The land burning in the Papua region allegedly carried out by a Korean company named KORINDO made K-Pop fans raise the hashtags #SavePapuaForests and #SaveHutanIndonesia on Twitter.	Raise the hashtags #SavePapuaForest and #SaveHutanIndonesia	https://www.pramborsfm.com

2	Donation		Social donation for 'Kanjuruhan' incident	https://twitter.com/InfosuporterID/status/1580098349734109184/photo/2
			Education donation	https://twitter.com/17CARATS_INA/status/1686346195877478400
			Pandemic Disaster Relief Donation	https://twitter.com/febieegusfa/status/1241306409352007681
			Earthquake Disaster Relief Donation	https://twitter.com/nctzenhumanity/status/1602272734251098112

			Environmental Care Donation	https://twitter.com/nctunion_ina/status/1339075807260463107
3	Action		Signing of a petition to boycott Ali Hamza, a Content Creator Spreading Slander and Hate	https://metrolampungnews.pikiran-rakyat.com
			Demonstration against omnibus law	https://twitter.com/baetaekook_/status/1313487460865921024/photo/1
			Protests against the House of Representatives (DPR RI) over the omnibus law and RUUKUHP	https://twitter.com/iluvexo9/status/1313361683679641600

		The action of distributing free vegetable aid packages to the community	https://twitter.com/KelCpdWtn/status/1461626220848705536/photo/1
		Emergency public bathing, washing, and toilet facilities (MCK) and generator construction for Cianjur earthquake survivors	https://twitter.com/blinkmf/status/1606591771148189696/photo/1

Source: Data processed by the author

The most massive forms of K-Pop fandom activism found on social media fall into at least three categories: discourse, donation, and action. Activism in the form of discourse is most prevalent in social media posts that are intensified to support certain issues. In the data contained in Table 1 above, K-Pop fandom activism in the form of discourse is present in the movement against black racism with the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter. All fans of various idol groups united to take action in defense by sending their idol's fancam videos on the Dallas police application until it could not be accessed for a while. Discourse activism is also present in the form of boycott movements against controversial influencer accounts that are considered to spread hatred and environmental movements that counter capitalistic corporations. Even in issues that had been busy in Indonesia such as the rejection of the ratification of the Job Creation Bill (Omnibus Law), K-Popers contributed as the largest community that enlivened and trended related hashtags on social media Twitter.

Apart from discourse, the second, more tangible activism appears in the form of donations. K-Pop fandom solidarity is useful in fundraising actions for social issues such as the Kanjuruhan riots that killed hundreds of people, education donations, disaster donations, and environmental donations. The total donations collected from K-pop idol fandoms were substantial. In the case of Kanjuruhan, two of the largest fandoms in Indonesia managed to raise funds for victims worth IDR 447,559,567 from the Army fandom and more than IDR 340,000,000 from the NCTZen fandom. Equally large values were also found in donations for disaster victims such as fundraising for victims of the COVID-19 pandemic disaster in Indonesia which almost reached 400

million rupiah and donations for victims of the Cianjur earthquake which claimed to have saved more than 10,000 lives as victims. Twitter posts from K-Pop fandoms containing calls for donations and the progress of the fundraising show activism that has an impact on society.

The third form of K-Pop fandom activism comes in the form of real-world actions as a follow-up to the discourse or invitation that had been enlivened on social media. Cases in Indonesia show the involvement of K-Pop fandom in real action on the ground comes in the form of signing petitions, demonstrations, campaigns, and direct aid distribution to beneficiaries. The most participated demo action by this fan-based community is the demonstration against the Job Creation Bill which is considered discriminatory. Their involvement is not only limited to joining demonstrations on the streets, but also educating each other among fellow fandom members to be more aware of the political issues that are being fought for (CNN Indonesia, 2020c). In addition, the demonstrations carried out by K-pop fandoms are also noteworthy, as participants display attributes that represent their identity as K-popers and play music by their idols to energize the demonstrations (Insertlive, 2020). The use of taglines and distinctive sentences by including the names of their favorite idols has made the existence of K-Pop lovers in the realm of aspiration delivery increasingly attract attention. The most participated demonstration by this fan-based community is the demonstration against the Job Creation Bill which is considered discriminatory. At least in terms of building public awareness.

Implication of K-Pop Fandom Activism on Social Media

The forms of K-Pop fandom activism in social media spaces in turn bring about real impacts not only in the lives of K-Pop fans or K-Pop fandoms, but also for the social life of society in general. There are at least three forms of real implications of fandom activism on social media, including political impacts, health impacts, and environmental impacts. These impacts are manifested in various forms of action. Data showing the three implications can be seen in the following table:

Table 2

Implications of K-Pop Fandom Activism on Social Media

No	Coding	Form	Description	Source
1	Political Implications	Campaign Sabotage	When asked whether K-Pop fans might only be strong in online activism, Suray said, "The fandom managed to topple the (Trump) campaign so that only 6,000 people attended. That, I think, already (illustrates) the power of the masses that emerged."	https://www.voaindonesia.com/a/menakar-kekuatan-fandom-k-pop-dalam-aktivisme-sosial-dan-politik/5504493.html
		Fight against app piracy	Not only did the K-Pop fandom take over social media, but it also took over iWatch Dallas, a Dallas Police app created to receive reports of illegal activity during the #BlackLivesMatter protests, and demand justice for George Floyd.	https://www.cnnindonesia.com/hiburan/20200624091003-248-516772/kpopers-dari-fandom-jadi-kekuatan-nyata-medsos

2	Health Implications	Socialization of health messages	"Entertainers can be a serious force in mobilizing impactful social change," lead author Herbert Chang said of his research, which found that K-Pop fans aided in the dissemination of health messages on social media Twitter, generating 111 times more online responses than non-K-Pop tweets.	https://viterbischool.usc.edu/news/2023/10/how-k-pop-fans-helped-covid-19-tweets-go-viral/
		COVID-19 pandemic relief fund distribution	"There has been much criticism of hashtag activism; however, to support COVID-19 relief efforts in South Korea, BTS fans donated money and refunded tickets from BTS concerts cancelled due to the pandemic, showing that the organizing potential of fandom should not be underestimated," Chang said.	https://home.dartmouth.edu/news/2023/10/k-pop-fans-helped-covid-19-public-health-messaging-go-viral
3	Environmental Implications	Establishment of an environmental community	K-Pop4Planet was formed as an environmental movement and a platform for K-Poppers to voice environmental issues. This movement was formed in March 2021, right on Earth Day, and has become an action organization that moves massively to this day.	https://www.ekuatorial.com/2021/05/nurul-sarifah-brisiknya-k-poppers-bisa-dorong-aksi-iklim-jaga-bumi/
		Tree planting action	It is recorded that the action of K-Pop fans together with the LindungiHutan platform from 2016 to 2023 has succeeded in planting 69,396 trees in various locations spread across Indonesia. This number comes from 17,532 donors who donated trees with LindungiHutan in 272 organized Nature Campaigns.	https://scientiarum.id/2023/07/21/aksi-baik-fans-k-pop-itu-banyak-kami-menanam-ribuan-pohon-dan-masih-terus-menanam/

Source: Data processed by the author

The first visible implication of the active social movement initiated by the K-Pop fandom on social media is the political implication. The movement initiated by the K-Pop fandom and Tiktok users on social media successfully sabotaged the campaign of US President Donald Trump in Tusla, Oklahoma. They ordered fictitious tickets and then did not attend the campaign (CNN Indonesia, 2020a). The next impact comes from the resistance movement against the injustice of George Floyd's death. The case, which was motivated by racial sentiment, succeeded in arousing the enthusiasm of K-Pop fans to attack the Dallas police and successfully take over the Dallas IWatch application

through K-Pop video spam. Not only that, the K-Popers' actions also spread to the Google Play Store and App Store where they made random comments about their idols while giving the app one beast. As a result, in less than 24 hours the Dallas police announced that there had been technical problems with the IWatch application so that it was no longer widely accessible (CNN Indonesia, 2020b).

The second implication of K-Pop fans' social media activism is in the realm of health. The large and solid community of K-Pop fans is very useful in spreading socialization messages, including health messages. In the pandemic era which took place around 2020 to 2022, health socialization was widely mediated through social media. A Dartmouth College study found that health socialization involving K-Pop issues has more power in reaching social media users. This can be seen from the WHO leader's post using the name of the Korean idol group BTS in 16 tweets, which achieved 111 times the virality of his tweets that did not include BTS (Engisch & Gholston, 2023). Most of the Twitter users who reposted his posts were from various K-Pop fandoms around the world. This suggests that K-Pop fandoms on social media contribute to the dissemination of health-related messages.

The third implication of K-Pop fandom activism on social media is the environmental implication. Long before being involved in political and health actions, K-Popers tended to have a high interest in environmental activities. Environmental actions are usually carried out during idol birthday celebrations, celebrations for the debut album of a favorite group/boyband, and celebrations for comeback personnel (Scientiarum, 2023). In the current era of social media, these actions are initiated more easily and massively. Social media has become a platform and instrument used to reach a wider mass. This can be seen from the formation of communities within the K-Pop fandom that have concerns in the environmental field such as K-Pop4Planet. In addition to community-based, real movements initiated by personal accounts representing various fandoms also have the power to realize environmental care actions. Accounts such as infiniteLjong as the fandom of idol groups Infinite and NCT are known to have carried out at least 19 environmental campaigns (Iqbal, 2022). At least in 2019, a total of 9 campaigns were conducted with 2,014 trees planted.

Discussion

This study highlighting K-Pop fandom activism on social media found three important results. First, drone emprit data shows K-Pop labeled accounts from various fandoms to be the highest category of social media users who raise important hashtags and trends on social media. This shows that K-Pop fandom activism is not limited to issues related to their community, but also contributes to important issues such as social, cultural, environmental, and political issues. Second, not limited to voicing aspirations and discourses on social media, K-Popers who are members of various fandoms also realize their activism through donations and real actions in the field such as filling out petitions, getting involved in demonstrations, campaigns, and aid distribution. Third, the K-Pop fandom's activism has implications for social change. Changes are present in at least three important aspects, namely politics, health, and the environment. The transformative implications on society show that the social media-based activism carried by the K-Pop fandom is not limited to futile discourse that ends up in the media. But it has the potential for social change.

K-Pop fandom activism on social media reflects the strengthening of the identity of the K-Pop music lovers community and changing the negative stigma that has been

attached to them. K-Pop fandom, which was originally seen as a fanatical fan-based community, has shifted to a community that is seen positively because it plays an active role in initiating social movements that have an impact on the wider community. Their involvement in voicing social, cultural, political, environmental, and health issues on social media has increased their virality. The virality aspect is the main potential of achieving the targeted message delivery (Chang et al., 2023). The power of mass and loyalty in K-Pop fandom gives this community the power to achieve virality in delivering activism messages on social media (Kanozia & Ganghariya, 2021). Although such activism does not fully change the status of the ruler and the existing social order, it is at least able to become a force to arouse the spirit of public activism from various backgrounds and levels (Yu & Xu, 2023).

The phenomenon of activism mediated by fan-based communities in virtual spaces shows that fandom can act as a powerful catalyst in realizing collective action. K-Pop fandom has social capital in the form of high deep trust, solidarity, and loyalty whose networks can be utilized to disseminate socialization messages and activism movements (Kanozia & Ganghariya, 2021). This also shows that social media-based activism does not always deserve to be claimed as slacktivism. Online activism based on social media that is considered self-aggrandizing and politically ineffective (Cabrera et al., 2017) has in some cases proven to be able to mobilize crowds (Gustafsson & Weinryb, 2020; Velasquez & LaRose, 2015). The wide network access, varied content, short attention span and conversations in short sentences on social media are the strengths in mobilizing activism messages (Lim, 2013). Thus, fandom and social media are an important collaboration in the success of activism messages and actions. That is why social media is considered effective as a medium for activism (Velasquez & LaRose, 2015). Social media plays a positive role in achieving activism goals, especially integrative activism (Chon & Park, 2020).

Previous studies that specifically analyze internet-based activism have not targeted fandom communities as initiators. Various studies show that internet-based activism has become a new space in mobilizing a community that leads to the effectiveness of social movement initiation (Earl et al., 2010; Kopacheva, 2021; Ribeiro et al., 2019; Yang, 2014). The use of the internet is considered to be a new alternative in communicating social movements in increasing the chances of participation of its members. The use of the internet medium as a form of activism has proven its implications for many changes, especially related to changes initiated by communities and political organizations to voice their interests (Kang, 2017; Postill, 2014). The phenomenon of activism has raised many issues that have great influence and continue to be discussed internationally such as gender, health, and environmental issues (Pronkina, 2020; Sima, 2011). Thus, existing studies emphasize that internet-based activism has not talked much about fandom as the main initiator of movements and changes that occur on social media.

The success of spreading activism messages manifested in the realization of real movements is a representation of the potential of fandom and social media. Fandom is not always presented as a community of fans who are apathetic and anti-socio-cultural issues but on the contrary, the power of the community they have can be accommodated positively. Social media as a forum for discourse can also be utilized as an important instrument in mediating messages and the spirit of activism. For this reason, a policy formulation is needed that can accommodate the practices of fan-

based activism that are realized online through social media platforms. This is inseparable from the challenges of hoaxes and misleading which are the main obstacles to the utilization of social media. Therefore, it is necessary to socialize digital literacy as a preventive effort so that the activism carried out can be used in accordance with its designation.

Conclusion

The findings of this study show that K-Pop fandom activism on social media contains complex forms and implications. This context can be seen through three important findings. First, the massive intensity of K-Pop fandom activism on social media in responding to political issues. Second, the form of K-Pop fandom activism is not only in the virtual realm but also leads to real social actions, such as the provision of petitions, donations and street actions "demonstrations". Third, K-Pop fandom activism has many implications in politics, health, and even the environment. This context occurs because the high deep trust, solidarity, and loyalty of the K-Pop fandom have implications in spreading factual messages. In other words, the messages conveyed in K-Pop fandom activism have the power to influence audiences' understanding and actions in interacting in real life.

The findings in this study are different from the studies that have been conducted. Studies that have discussed digital community activism only focus on the context of media efficiency, pros and cons and even negative implications of digital community activism. Taking the perspective of K-Pop fandom activism as a change in the fan activism movement has made it possible to answer questions about the shifting orientation of fan activism. This study shows that K-Pop fandom digital community activism is not a slacktivism movement but is based on real actions that have implications for changes in understanding and actions in politics, health, and the environment. Therefore, the findings in this study are not only expected to serve as a basis for previous studies, but are also expected to evaluate the reputation of K-Pop fandom, which is often regarded as a form of slacktivism.

This study has limitations in its data collection process, as it was conducted solely through the review of Twitter data. In other words, the data obtained and described in this study is only based on reading the keywords "Kpopers care", "Kpopers donate", and "the power of kpopers on social media" so that it cannot provide empirical conclusions. However, the limitations of this study are expected to be the basis for future studies, especially studies that want to explain digital community activism by interviewing each individual involved in digital community activism. By integrating the views and experiences of those directly involved in activism, the purpose and values behind digital community activism can be explained more comprehensively.

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