

**PERCEPTION OF DIGITAL ACTIVITIES WITHIN NCT FANS THAT AFFECT
FANATIC BEHAVIOR**



UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

**Submitted to Fulfill the Requirements for Obtaining a bachelor's degree in
Communication Studies at the Faculty of Psychology and Social-Culture Science
Universitas Islam Indonesia**

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LETTER OF AGREEMENT

UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

**PERCEPTION OF DIGITAL ACTIVITIES WITHIN NCT FANS THAT AFFECT
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It has been given permission by the thesis supervisor to be tested and
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Through this letter I stated that:

1. During the process of accomplishing this thesis research, researchers did not perform academic frauds in any kind of form, such as plagiarism, involving others in making the thesis, or any other kind of violations which are contradicting the academic ethics highly upheld by Universitas Islam Indonesia.
2. Therefore, this thesis is a pure form of my scientific work as a student and a researcher, and not involving other people/parties.
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Hence this statement is truly sincere.

Yogyakarta, June 4th 2024

Stating,



Narendra Daani Aryanto

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"When you're tired, take a break for a while instead of stopping a whole. It is impossible fate to bring us this far if only to fail. Keep going and do what you can."

- Author

"Sometimes its beauty, sometimes its pain, sometimes its sunshine, sometimes its rain."

- Little Mix [Clued Up]

"I hope our youthful days won't be left as regrets, it's okay to be broken and bumped into each other, I never give up."

- Treasure's Choi Hyun Suk [It's Okay]

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to:

My parents, my family who always giving me a lot of support and of course myself who is always standing & staying strong until now.

- Author

- Little Mix [Clued Up]

- Treasure's Choi Hyun Suk [It's Okay]

I dedicate this work to:

My parents, my family who always giving me a lot of support and of course myself who is always standing & staying strong until now.

الجمعة الاستدراكية

FOREWORD

Assalamualaikum Wr.Wb.

Alhamdulillahillobbil'amin, all praise is due to Allah SWT for His favors and blessings in every step I take in this life. Shalawat and salam are always poured out to our Prophet Muhammad SAW for all the values until the end of the time, so that the researcher could accomplished this undergraduate thesis entitled "Perception of Digital Activities Within NCT Fans That Affect Fanatic Behavior".

The thesis is about acknowledging fandom's perception towards the digital activity in nowadays era. This thesis is submitted to gain my bachelor's degree from the Communication Studies Department, Faculty of Psychology and Social-Culture Science, Universitas Islam Indonesia.

This thesis is really special to researcher because many memories, ups and downs, joyful were occurred during the phase of creating the thesis. First of all, I would like to thank my family, my parents, my sister who always give never-ending support to researcher in finishing this thesis. I also would like to thank my thesis supervisor Mrs. Ida Nuraini Dewi Kodrat Ningsih, S.I.KOM., M.A. for her guidance and assistance to me while arranging and finishing this thesis. Without her support, suggestions, and advices, this thesis would not have been completed in time and as valuable as it is supposed to be. I hope all the good things from Allah SWT will return her kindness.

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Warm Regard,



Narendra Daani Aryanto

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ABSTRACT

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The Korean music culture has become a significant phenomenon in today's era. Many agencies produce and debut new idol groups widely acclaimed works. This has led to the global expansion of fandoms. Simultaneously, technology of digital platforms in today's era also grows rapidly. Those digital platforms' new features provide users with diverse functionalities. Fandom uses digital platforms for various activities. These activities have significant impacts, both positive or even negative. This research will be carried out using qualitative method. Purposive sampling is employed to obtain relevant informants as the primary data source for this research. To gather additional data, this research will also apply snowball sampling to obtain further evidence from other informants. To complete the research, six informants were involved in this research to provide statements related to the research topic. This study examines fans' perceptions of fandom and digital activities in the context of idol culture, revealing that while digital platforms facilitate entertainment, social interaction, and creative expression, fans' perceptions are influenced by factors such as audio-visual content, personal background, and social environment, and although these platforms offer valuable tools for engagement, they also present challenges like enabling fanaticism, emphasizing the need for responsible digital behavior and awareness of online actions' lasting impact within fandom communities.

Keywords: perception, digital activities, fandom

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

The development of K-Pop has significantly changed in recent years. The K-pop wave, also known as the “Korean Wave”, is a musical cultural phenomenon in society that involves spreading K-pop music to worldwide audiences outside of South Korea (Williams & Ho, 2014). Today, artists like BTS, BLACKPINK, and others have achieved worldwide success with their hit songs. K-pop music has significantly influenced the global music scene. As K-pop has evolved, so too have the fandoms associated with individual artists. According to Aoki (2022), fandoms are a form of popular pop culture in general, including pop music, romance novels, comics, and mass-appealing Hollywood stars, passionately remade by a particular group of people. A fandom will support their favorite artists and their works. Alongside the increasing number of K-pop bands being produced and promoted using internet technology, it is difficult to get an accurate picture of the number of K-pop fans around the world (Laffan, 2020). Many members of fandom community meet virtually and talk to each other about the same topic of interest, often using Twitter platform as their communication medium.

The development of today has facilitated easier communication across broader networks. Numerous activities can now be integrated into social media. Those digital activities include fandoms that idolizes the favorite artist. According to Wahyuningtyas (2021), digital fandoms are readers of cultural texts who actively interpret the media products and engage in online activities such as meaning sharing, commenting, discussion, debate, or other social media activities. Most of them meet on social media to make new friends and join communities to share the same interests. Fans who idolize the same artist often develop a sense of connection. This sense of connection is because they are in the same fandom community.

However, conflicts can still arise within the community. The case study in this research is Safa Space. In May 2022, an incident occurred within the NCTzen fandom, the community that idolizes NCT, a South Korean boy group. In the fandom world, there is a term called ‘Solo Stan’, which means only idolizing certain members of a group. According to Wiryanti (2021), solo stans

are fans who only support one or two of their favorite members in an idol group, focusing on the idols and prioritizing their own happiness. The incident began with Safa, who was considered a solo stan because, although she idolized NCT, she favored only certain members. Safa's actions caused anger among the fans of the member whose name was insulted. The conflict escalated, leading to a digital discussion forum held on Twitter's Space feature. Space is a feature on Twitter where people can discuss and talk to each other publicly. Someone created a Space forum with the intention of having Safa apologize to those angered and affected by her action. The space forum was held around 2 hours. During the forum, Safa was questioned by many participants and bullied for what she had done. Safa is also required to apologize for her actions. Participants demanded Safa to make an apology video and also to sign the letter with the duty stamp signed by her parents. One participant, using the display name 'Berflowerrr,' emotionally threatened to take legal action against Safa, believing that the case was related to the UU ITE law. Berflowerrr claimed herself as a human rights activist and stated in space forum, "Safa, I am the representative for Na Jaemin and Hwang Renjun. I have called my lawyer to bring this case to court. So, don't you mess around." this was said in the forum to Safa. At the end of the space forum, Safa apologized to everyone involved. Following her statements in the forum, Berflowerrr was also bullied for overreacting, and eventually, she apologized on her own Twitter account.

There are so many kinds of digital activities exist in today's era as explained before such as operating and doing all the activities in digital platforms. The act to support the favorite artist is often to happen in fandom world. It is considered as positive behavior as long as the things keep going in nice way. On other hand, sometime the digital platform not only the good fans. There is always an anti-fan which also leads to negative activities in fandom that can cause a serious conflicts and even digital wars.

The urgency of doing this research is to understand the impact that digital activities on social media can cause. There are numerous positive and negative impacts. The Safa Space case illustrates how digital activities can lead to conflicts within fandoms and how fans may become confrontational to protect their idols. This behavior is referred to as 'fanaticism,' indicating an intense and obsessive devotion. This research focuses on Twitter because the case in question occurred there, and the researcher will seek to interview individuals who were involved in the situation at the time. By focusing on Twitter, the researcher can concentrate on the research and

gather relevant data. Other social media platforms played a role in spreading information about the case, which is why this case has spread rapidly. In the current era, many fandoms use Twitter for their activities and interactions. This research aims to explore how digital activities might may influence perceptions of fanatic behavior. The research will use the phenomenology approach to broaden the understanding of various related objects in this research. The researcher aims to study perceptions because fandoms and idolizing artists are often viewed negatively. The research seeks to understand the fandom's perspective on digital activities. The researcher will investigate how digital activities within fandoms affect fanatic behavior by through interviews with relevant international and local participants. This topic was chosen due to the limited research available, and the study aims to contribute valuable insights for future research.

B. Research Questions

To go deeper in the analysis and discussion, the researcher will use the foundation questions below:

1. How does perception of digital activities within NCT fans affect fanatic behavior?
2. What factors influence perception of digital activities within NCT fans that affect fanatic behavior?

C. Research Objectives

By conducting this research, the objectives are:

1. To understand perception of digital activities within NCT fans affect fanatic behavior.
2. To identify the factors influencing perception of digital activities within NCT fans that affect fanatic behavior.

D. Research Benefits

1. Academic Benefits

The findings of this research are expected to benefit communication students and practitioners interested in the perception of digital activities and fanatic behavior. Furthermore, this research is expected to serve as a reference for future studies examining perceptions of digital activities.

2. Practical Benefits

The research is expected to provide information and insights to readers about perceptions of digital activity in the current era.

E. Literature Review

1. Previous Research

a. Fans, Fandoms or Fanaticism?

The research on the topic of consumer culture focuses on the role of fans in making social spaces or fandoms, as opposed to the broader society, where new cultural meanings and values are socially negotiated. In examining media and culture, the study defines fandom as a process rooted in the broader phenomenon of fanaticism and how it interacts with modern society. The article offers an in-depth analysis of fandom, highlighting its role in a broader historical and cultural issue that appears as consumerism and branding fanaticism within the current consumer culture. The study recognizes fanaticism as an exciting topic of study and investigates the impact of consumption and branding on consumer identity. As prejudice is a controversial issue, both culturally and academically, future research using prejudice as a lens to study consumer culture will further contribute to current theoretical and ethical debates about Akhafan's approach (Cristofari and Guitton, 2016).

The similarity between this study and the current research lies in the exploration of fanaticism, which originates from the behavior of fandoms when idolizing certain artists. However, the current research differs in that it focuses more on society's perception of digital activities within NCT fans and how this affects fanatic behavior.

b. The Relationship between Fandom and Well-Being

The research presented here focuses on the link between fandom and happiness. This research provides evidence of fandom behavior. Fandom refers to the act of supporting something, whether a person, character, or brand. Thus, fandom can be seen as a form of intense consumer loyalty. Previous studies have demonstrated that incorporating principles of well-being into consumer branding enhances customer satisfaction. This study quantitatively supports this finding by examining people involved in fandom. People are subject to numerous limitations as a result of the COVID-19

pandemic. Various events were canceled or shortened because entertainment was deemed unessential. However, fans continued to support their favorites in a variety of ways and found joy and happiness in doing so. In the long term, this action would have contributed to the fans' overall well-being.

This study's findings may be summarized rather than discussed. More comprehensive studies, including the collection of qualitative data, are required to enhance the generalizability of this study's conclusions. Furthermore, all data for this study were gathered in Japan. Fandom is heavily influenced by cultural background. This research recommends future studies include cross-cultural comparisons.

The similarity between this study and the current research lies in their focus on fandom behavior when idolizing artists. However, this study was conducted in Japan using a quantitative method, whereas the current research will employ a qualitative approach, aiming to interview relevant participants to gather real data on how digital activities within fandoms affects fanatic behavior.

c. Influence of Digital Media Advertisements of KPOP Industry on Selected Young Adults in Manila, Philippines

Five hundred and forty-seven (547) young K-pop fans from Metro Manila, aged 15 to 30 years, participated in the study. The respondents were identified using simple random sampling, and given the limits of the COVID-19 pandemic scenario, the number of respondents chosen was deemed sufficient for the study. This research provides evidence of fanatic behavior among individuals who idolize a favorite artist. They showed their support for K-pop music by purchasing physical copies and streaming them online. They kept up-to-date with the latest K-pop news and articles and collected merchandise related to the pop scene. Satisfaction was immediately achieved since the items and services were created to an acceptable standard of excellence. The respondents received the information from the website and social media sites dedicated to pop culture. Eventually, fan-artist interactions became visible on social media sites, but face-to-face interactions were unlikely to avoid further incidents.

The similarity between this study and the current research is that both examine fandom fanatic behavior, particularly when individuals become deeply devoted to a specific artist. However, the difference lies in the focus of the current study, which aims to prove fanatical behavior through consumerism, such as the purchase of idol merchandise.

d. Fanaticism: An Analysis On Bts’ “Army” Fan Behavior On Twitter

This research examines fandom behavior, especially when they do activities virtually. They use a certain social media platform, Twitter, which facilitates unrestricted interaction and various activities. Twitter’s technology enables easier and more unrestricted interaction on digital platforms. ARMY, as a fandom, also does various activities, such as supporting their idols, interacting with each other, and even managing some social campaigns like #BlackLivesMatter, demonstrating positive fandom behavior.

The similarity between this research and the current study lies in the use of a qualitative method for in-depth data analysis. While the current study discusses the fanatical behavior of a fandom and seeks to understand this behavior, this research aims to explore people’s perceptions of digital activity within fandoms.

e. Transformation of Fan Culture Under the Influence of Social Media

This research is also talking about fandom activities through social media. The first is how social media and technology development affect fandom. The second is how fan culture affects the economy and society. This study could aid in subsequent research on fan culture, social media, and their relationship, as well as provide the public with a deeper understanding of fandom and fan culture and its working principles behind the surface. The study employed a literature review to address the issue. The literature review includes academic papers from Google Scholar, the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), and secondary data from media publications.

The difference between this research and the current study is that the latter aims to explore people’s perceptions of the digital activities carried out by fandoms in the current era, using a qualitative method.

2. Theoretical Framework

a. Perception

According to Yusuf (2021), perception is the way we perceive and make sense of the world around us. It involves internal mental processes of paying attention to, organizing, and interpreting the various inputs from our surroundings. This perceptual experience consequently shapes how we act and behave. Walgito (2004) stated that perception is a series of processes that occur after receiving information through the human senses. This process begins with sensing, where stimuli from the external environment are captured by sensory organs such as the eyes, ears, skin, and so on. However, perception is not just the reception of raw stimuli but involves the organization and interpretation of this sensory information. Through perception, individuals give meaning to the stimuli they receive so that they have a certain meaning. Thus, perception includes integrated responses that occur within a person to understand the world around him based on the interpretation of sensory input. Every human can have their own perception. Based on the Cambridge Dictionary (2023), the definition of perception is a belief or opinion that many people often hold based on how things look. Perception is based on every person's opinion of something that they see or hear in their society. According to Mulyana (2023), perception occurs through several steps, which are as follows:

1) Sensation

Sensation is a fundamental stage in the perception process. At this stage, human senses such as sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell function to perceive various stimuli from the external environment. These five senses act like recipients of raw information, which is then transmitted to the brain in the form of nerve impulses for further processing. Without sensation, information from the outside world would be inaccessible to our perception system.

2) Attention

After sensation, the next stage is attention. Given the large number of stimuli the senses receive at any time, attention functions to select and focus our mental energy on only certain portions of information. This stage is

important because it determines which stimuli will be processed deeply in the next stage of perception and which will be ignored. The level of attention paid will influence how the final perception is formed.

3) Interpretation

Interpretation is the core stage of perception, where all sensory input that has passed through sensation and attention is organized and interpreted to obtain meaning. During this stage, the brain combines, relates, and integrates the various fragments of information into a coherent and meaningful mental representation based on the individual's experiences, values, hopes, and mindset. The final result of this interpretation process is a perception that is complete and has important meaning for a person.

After understanding the detailed steps involved in perception, Mulyana (2023) categorizes perception into two forms:

1) Perception of Objects

When a person perceives objects in the physical environment, such as inanimate objects, one relies on interpreting physical cues or signs captured by our senses. For example, perception of a table is based on seeing its shape, touching its surface, or the sound it makes when tapped. These kinds of physical objects are static and cannot provide any feedback. In addition, changes to physical objects tend to be slow and gradual, such as changes in color or shape over time. We cannot observe drastic or spontaneous changes in inanimate objects. Thus, perception of the physical world is highly dependent on the ability to accurately interpret every available physical signal using our senses.

2) Social Perception

On the other hand, perceptions of fellow humans are much more complex and dynamic. When perceiving other people, one cannot rely solely on verbal symbols such as speech and writing but also non-verbal communication such as facial expressions, body language, and voice intonation, which are often difficult to predict and vary in meaning. More than

that, social perception also involves efforts to understand other people's internal characteristics such as emotions, motivation, expectations, personality, and so on. Here, not only perceive a person's external appearance but also try to interpret what is behind their attitudes and behavior. This kind of perception process tends to be two-way interactive. In social interaction, both the perceiver and the perceived give each other stimuli and responses that influence each other's perception. The owner's perceptions can influence how other people perceive and give feedback to it, and vice versa. There is a constant dynamic of reciprocity in social perception.

In essence, perception of the physical world is more static and limited to the interpretation of physical signs. Meanwhile, social perception is much more diverse, involves understanding the inner side of humans, and is interactive and influences each other between the perceiver and the perceived.

According to Wood (2016), several factors influence human perception, including:

- 1) Physiology

The sensory abilities of each person can affect how they perceive something. The physiological sensory abilities of each person, including variations in visual acuity, color perception, auditory sensitivity, touch sensitivity, taste and smell perception, age-related changes, genetic factors, and health conditions, can significantly impact how they perceive and experience external stimuli from their environment. These physiological factors related to the sensory organs and neural pathways determine the initial detection and processing of sensory information, ultimately shaping an individual's unique perceptual experiences. For instance, differences in visual acuity can lead to varied perceptions of visual stimuli, while variations in auditory sensitivity can influence the perception of sounds. Similarly, touch sensitivity affects the perception of textures and tactile sensations, and taste and smell perception shapes the experience of flavors and aromas. Age-related declines, genetic traits, and certain health conditions can further

modulate these sensory abilities, contributing to individual differences in perception.

2) Culture

The culture in which we live can affect how we interpret visual stimuli. The culture a person grows up in greatly affects how they see and understand visual things like images, symbols, and colors. This is because every culture has its own:

- a) Beliefs: The ideas and views that a cultural group considers true or important.
- b) Values: The principles and standards that a cultural group sees as desirable or worthwhile.
- c) Practices: The customs, traditions, and ways of doing things that are common in a cultural group.
- d) Ways of interpreting experiences: The frameworks or lenses through which a cultural group makes sense of what they see and encounter.

All these parts of culture act like filters that shape how people from that culture perceive and assign meaning to visual information. For example, the same color or image might mean very different things to people from diverse cultural backgrounds based on their cultural beliefs, values, practices, and interpretative frameworks. So, it depends on the culture someone belongs to; they may understand visual symbols, signs, pictures, etc., quite differently than someone from another culture. This cultural influence is always present, shaping our visual perception and understanding in subtle or obvious ways.

3) Social & Professional Roles

Social and professional roles significantly influence an individual's perceptions and communicative behavior. The perceptions and modes of communication one exhibits are susceptible to being molded by the explicit and implicit messages conveyed by others regarding the expectations associated with fulfilling particular roles in society. Moreover, the intrinsic demands and obligations inherent to the roles one occupies, whether in a social or professional context, exert a formative impact on how situations are perceived and how interpersonal interactions are navigated. Thus, the roles

ascribed to an individual by societal forces and the pragmatic exigencies of those roles shape the individual's perceptual and communicative frameworks in a profound manner.

4) Cognitive Abilities

People can think about situations and others in elaborate ways, depending on their personal knowledge. There are two forms of this: cognitive complexity and person-centered perception. Cognitive complexity refers to the number of concepts a person uses, how abstract those concepts are, and how intricately they interact to shape perceptions. Person-centered perception is the ability to view someone as a unique individual, separate from social roles and generalizations about the groups they belong to. These two forms determine the depth and individualized nature of a person's perceptions of others and situations.

b. Fandom, Behavior, and Digital Activity

Fandom is a term for a group of people that have the same interest, especially idolizing the same artist. A fandom, according to Aoki (2022), is a passionate remaking of popular pop culture in general, including pop music, romance books, comics, and mass-appealing Hollywood figures. A fandom has the quality that followers back their favorites in a variety of ways, gaining a sense of success and enjoyment as a result. The behavior of idolizing artists has become a widespread phenomenon in the modern day, implying that there are numerous fandoms in society. In the era of globalization and modern technology, the transfer of information has become easier through social media platforms, which facilitate digital activities related to idolizing artists.

The electronic exchange of data or content between two or more parties utilizing digital technology-based devices and platforms can be referred to as digital communication (Asari, 2023). In other words, digital communication is the delivery of messages or information from a source to a recipient using completely digital or computerized media and channels. Digital activity can be said to be all the activities that are being done on social media platforms. People are engaging in online activities such as sharing, commenting, discussing, debating, and many other activities that can be done

through social media (Wahyuningtyas, 2021). People can meet new virtual friends who have the same interests and share information with each other. According to Fauzi et al. (2023), digital platforms offer several benefits for accessing information and engaging in various activities:

1) Accessibility of information in the digital era

In today's modern era, one of the most striking technological achievements is the presence of the internet. The internet is a global computer network that allows users to access information from various parts of the world very easily. Through the internet, searching and getting any information can be done with just a few clicks. Apart from that, the internet also facilitates communication with certain parties without being limited by distance. The main added value of using the internet lies in effectiveness, efficiency, high ease of access, practicality in use, and unlimited affordability of information.

2) Utilization of technology to support work

Technological developments have brought many conveniences to various aspects of life, including the world of work. By utilizing existing technological devices and systems, every job can be completed in a much easier, faster, and more efficient way. Various tasks that previously required extra effort and a long time can now be executed with the help of technology in a more practical way. Furthermore, advances in information technology also open up new opportunities for individuals to earn additional income through internet-based activities that have the potential to generate financial income.

3) Facilitate the communication process

One aspect of life that has been truly revolutionized by the development of information technology is the process of communication between humans. In this digital era, communicating with other parties has become much easier with the presence of various sophisticated communication features and platforms. Many new features are offered to facilitate and streamline information transfer and interaction between individuals. A concrete example that makes communication easier is the voice note feature, which allows real-time and instant voice messages to be sent to recipients without having to type via a keyboard. This feature is useful

for communicating more quickly in certain conditions when typing becomes difficult.

4) Ease of transactions

Apart from ease of communication, one of the great benefits of the development of information technology is the convenience offered in various aspects and sectors of activity, including ease of transactions. In this digital era, transaction activities can not only be carried out conventionally face to face but can also be carried out online, which is more practical and efficient. Technology now plays an important role as a means for carrying out various types of transactions online, such as financial transactions, purchasing goods/services, and so on. The online transaction process provides high ease of access without being limited by distance and time.

In today's connected digital era, communication is no longer limited to direct face-to-face interactions. Now, communication can be done via various digital platforms, which are defined as means of communication that use media based on digital technology. These platforms include email, social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram; instant messaging applications such as WhatsApp, Line, and Telegram; video conferencing services such as Zoom and Google Meet; collaboration platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Trello, online discussion forums, and gaming applications. According to Asari (2023), one of the main advantages of communicating via digital platforms is the extraordinary level of convenience and efficiency. Users can exchange messages in various forms, such as text, images, audio, video, and even files, very quickly and easily via the internet network without being constrained by distance or time. The communication process becomes more seamless and dynamic. Not only that, digital platforms also facilitate the creation of virtual communities and allow users to connect with each other to build relationships and extensive social networks. Through this platform, users can join groups with the same interests, participate in discussions, and exchange information more effectively. In general, a platform can be defined as a digital-based facility or system that humans use as a means to carry out various activities, including communication (Asari, 2023). A platform is a virtual container that is specifically used to execute a series of commands according to a program system plan

that has been previously arranged and patterned by the developer. By utilizing the various features and functionalities offered by digital platforms, we can communicate more efficiently, connect with more people, and gain access to wider information compared to communicating conventionally.

The more people engage on social media, the more of them also become addicted in using it. The true value of fandom, however, was shown to be in the ability to connect with and socialize with other fans. The second reflection revealed that supporters in fandom are motivated by enhanced cultural and social worth. Continuing the premise that fans want pleasure, they want more of it, which they might get in collective communities. They can learn new things here, play roleplaying games, and act out ‘fannish’ behaviors with others (Hansen, 2016). The phenomenon of fanatics can be seen in various fandoms that become too addicted to their favorite artist. Fanatic is the higher level of liking a person or something. Fanatic or Fanaticism is an extreme interest in something that others find inappropriate (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022). Fanaticism can also be defined as a form of extreme enthusiasm and devotion to a particular person. This extreme behavior often leads to aggressive behavior, as fans tend to be defensive towards idols due to their attachment and high interest in them. The belief that one’s idol is superior to others is another factor in fans’ aggressive behavior as a primary defense mechanism for fans to show support for their idol (Sihombing & Andini, 2022).

F. Research Method

1. Paradigm

This research will use the constructivist paradigm to get to know more about audiences’ perspectives on the related topic, which is perception towards digital activities on social media. This paradigm will lead to getting to know each person differently since every person has their own background to interpret something. It also facilitates a deeper exploration of how individuals construct meaning. The constructivist paradigm is very appropriate when research aims to understand the informants’ perception or meaning of a phenomenon. Constructivism is based on the premise that reality is a social construction formed from the subjective meaning of individuals. Each person constructs their own perception and understanding of reality based on their experiences, background, and social

interactions. By using this paradigm, the researcher can explore in depth how informants interpret and construct reality based on their own perspectives and interpretations. The researcher aims not only to gather objective facts but to understand the holistic process of meaning-making among the audience.

In the constructivism paradigm, according to Umanailo (2019), the researcher strive to position themselves on an equal footing with the subjects being researched and are directly involved with informants as much as possible. The goal is for the researcher to build a deep understanding of how subjects construct meaning and reality based on their own perspectives. The researcher not only observes from the outside but also tries to enter the subject's world, listen, and capture the construction of meaning formed in the subject's mind empathetically and thoroughly. The constructivism paradigm allows the researcher to engage empathetically with informants, listen to their stories and opinions, and analyze the construction of meaning they build towards a phenomenon. The result is a deep and contextually rich understanding of informants' perceptions regarding digital activity in the modern era.

2. Type of Method

This research will use the qualitative method with a phenomenology approach. The qualitative method is needed to explain data that cannot be expressed through statistical or numerical means. As Sugiyono (2022) stated, qualitative research is a method that seeks to interpret and describe data using non-numerical information like words and visuals. The data collected takes the form of narratives, observations, or imagery rather than statistics or quantitative measures. The researcher will analyze this descriptive data by identifying patterns and themes, then present their findings using rich explanations and examples to provide an in-depth understanding for the readers. The aim is to provide a detailed account using descriptive evidence in a way that is accessible and insightful for readers. This research will also include an interview session with some relevant informants who claim to be fans of NCT and can answer related questions about the topic. The target is to reach six informants as data resources for this research.

3. Respondent Selection Technique

To make this research reliable, a perfect match of respondents must be obtained by using the right sampling method (Zhang, 2007). This research will use purposive sampling because it requires a respondent who knows the details about the case and will probably get involved in that situation. Purposive sampling means that sampling is used to choose respondents to find out a certain case study with relevant informants. The researcher will seek respondents both within the community and on Twitter. Relevant interviewees will include active members of the NCT fandom on social media, particularly Twitter, who are familiar with the Safa Space case. This means that the researcher deliberately selects certain participants or data sources that are considered to be the most representative and capable of providing in-depth information regarding the phenomenon being studied.

According to Nasution (2023), purposive sampling allows the researcher to identify and select samples based on specified criteria and considerations. These criteria may include characteristics such as specific knowledge, experience, or involvement in the issue under study. By using this technique, the researcher does not choose samples randomly but selectively chooses participants who are believed to have the best understanding of the research topic. This approach is particularly useful in qualitative research, where the goal is to gain deep insight into and a rich understanding of the phenomenon under study. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to obtain rich and relevant data by selecting data sources that are most informative and competent in revealing the required perspectives. To enhance the data, the researcher will also use snowball sampling to identify additional relevant informants, ensuring the research needs are fully met. Sugiharto (2003) stated that snowball sampling involves identifying additional informants through existing contacts. These informants should have similar roles or professions and a good understanding of the topic to provide relevant insights during the interview.

4. Data Collection Technique

The primary data collection technique will be interviews, session which will be interpreted at the end of this research to get the result. Some documents from social media, such as Twitter, will also be used here.

a. Interview

An interview session is needed to get the in-depth answer from the informants related to the topic of the research. Detailed information can be gained in this session after conducting direct communication with the informants.

b. Documentation

Screenshots of posts on Twitter will also be used as supporting evidence in this research. Tweets related to the topic from fans will serve as documentation and supporting evidence.

5. Data Analysis Unit

According to Sugiyono (2022) there are few activities in analyzing the data, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion or verification.

a. Data Reduction

When conducting research, the researcher will find and obtain various kinds of data. The more data, the more complex and complicated it becomes. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze data through data reduction, which means the process of illustrating, focusing, and transforming raw data obtained from the field into a simpler and more manageable form. This process involves selecting, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming rough data that emerges from written notes in the field. By conducting data reduction, the researcher can summarize the main points, develop a research focus on important aspects, and identify patterns and themes that are relevant to the research objectives.

b. Data Display

After reducing the data, the next step will be presenting the data. Data that has been reduced and organized will be presented in a more systematic form to make it easier to draw conclusions and take further action. Data presentation can be in the form of narrative descriptions, tables, relationships between categories, flow diagrams, or other forms that integrate information in an integrated and concise display. The organization of the data aims to improve understanding and help plan research work.

c. Conclusion

After the data has been collected, the next step is to draw conclusions. Conclusions are the final stage in the qualitative data analysis process. At this stage, the researcher attempts to formulate the meaning and implications of the data that has been collected and analyzed. Conclusions are drawn inductively, namely by looking at patterns, explanations, and cause-and-effect relationships that emerge from the data. The conclusions drawn are still tentative and open to verification while the research is still ongoing. The researcher needs to look for further supporting data to be able to obtain valid and credible final conclusions.

CHAPTER II

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH OBJECT

Nowadays, the world is already familiar with the K-pop music industry. Various agencies have produced and created many talented artists in the industry. The topic related to this research is NCT, a boy group from SM Town agency. NCT debuted in January 2016 with a few sub-unit groups, which are NCT U, NCT 127, NCT Dream, NCT WayV, NCT DoJaeJung, and NCT Wish, with a total of the members is around 26 members (Alvirtyantoro, 2024). They have a specific fandom name, which is called NCTzen or Sijeuni. The specific group unit that is being talked about in this research is NCT Dream, which has seven members: Jeno, Jaemin, Mark, Haechan, Renjun, Jisung, and Chenle. This group unit gained a lot of popularity after the release of their full studio album entitled 'Hot Sauce'. As a famous group, there has to be a risk of getting new fans and even a bunch of people who do not like them. This kind of situation can lead those fans into a conflict with one another. Especially with the technology of social media in this era, which makes it easier to access many people doing activities.

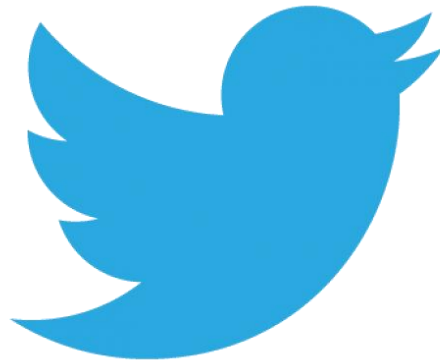
The development of today's era also has an impact on the development of social media. Social media can connect people around the world to interact and engage in many kinds of activities. All of the activities that happen on social media can be said to be digital activities done by the users. Digital is related to searching, evaluating, using, and making digital content in meaningful and responsible ways. One of the social media platforms that is often used for fandom is Twitter. Twitter is one of the most famous and useful online platforms that we can operate by using our smartphones nowadays. People can use Twitter to post many things that they would like to share, such as photos and videos, or they can even just post text messages. According to Singh & Bagchi (2020: 1), Twitter is one of the world's most popular social media platforms, with over 330 million monthly active users around the globe. Twitter is also a technology that can provide communication tools for users by using the Direct Message feature. This feature will connect us to people that we want to talk with. We can also see many interactions between people on the homepage timeline. Twitter really provides easy access for the users to interact and reach many people. We can make new friends here globally since the users are around the world. This is why Twitter is interesting to use. Actually, there are still a lot of benefits to using this application as

communication media for us. According to Rizal (2023), here are some features provided by Twitter:

1. Fast Transfer: Users can easily share their thoughts by posting on their own account or homepage.
2. Retweet: This feature allows users to re-share other people's posts to their followers and also expand the relevant content to the account.
3. Hashtag and Trending Topics: Twitter provides a hashtag system that allows users to choose certain topics and find out global topics which is still trending worldwide.
4. Twitter Spaces: In response to the popularity of audio live streaming, Twitter provides a Spaces feature, which allows users to create and join a live discussion through Twitter Spaces.
5. Mute: Users can use this Mute feature to mute accounts or even some words that we do not want to see on our homepage timeline. It is different with the Block feature. If we use the Mute feature, then the account that we muted can still see our page account, but if we use the Block feature, then both accounts cannot see each other's page anymore. This feature helps a lot with the privacy and comfort of the users.

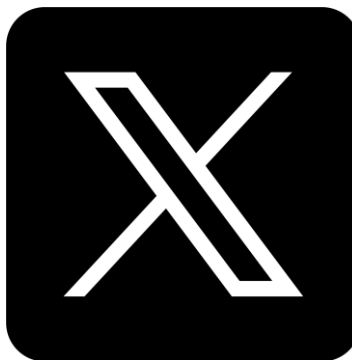
On July 23rd, 2023, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter underwent a major rebranding initiative spearheaded by its new owner, Elon Musk, the chief executive officer of Tesla Inc. The company, which was previously incorporated as Twitter Inc., has been restructured and renamed to X Corp. This rebranding extended beyond a mere name change, as it also encompassed a comprehensive overhaul of the platform's visual identity. Notably, the iconic blue bird logo that had become synonymous with Twitter's brand has been replaced by a minimalist, monochromatic representation of the letter "X." This new emblem, rendered in a stark black and white color scheme, signifies a departure from the platform's previous branding and a shift towards a more streamlined and modern aesthetic. Despite these significant changes to the platform's outward appearance, it is important to note that the core functionalities and features that users have become accustomed to remain largely intact. The rebranded platform continues to offer a microblogging service that allows users to share short messages, images, and multimedia content, as well as engage in real-time conversations and discussions on a wide range of topics. While the

motivations behind this rebranding exercise have not been explicitly stated by the company's leadership, industry analysts speculate that it may be part of a broader strategy to reposition the platform as a more versatile and multifaceted digital ecosystem, potentially transcending its roots as a social media network.



Picture 2. 1 Twitter logo

(Source: freepnglogos)



Picture 2. 2 X logo

(Source: satpolppmalang)

This application is the most used by fandom in doing their digital activities and interacting as fandom life. A fandom is a group of people who idolize certain artists. The growth of fandom nowadays is also increasing because there are so many big and new artists appearing in the entertainment industry, especially the music industry. A fandom can occur when a group of people have the same interests and also intentions. Having this kind of emotion will create a bond between

them. They will feel that they have a good connection and also a relationship to get to know each other deeper. Creating this bond can also make them last longer as fans. Since a fandom shares the same interests, their behavior as a fandom will act like they feel really proud of their idol. A feeling of happiness can appear from this behavior. Many fandoms are using Twitter for their daily life activities as fandom. They interact with each other through this application, and so on. They even showed their support and love towards the idol using this digital platform. People can freely express their feelings, emotions, and opinions through this application. The fandom that is being talked about in this research is NCTzen, which is a fandom of the K-Pop boy group NCT from SM Town entertainment agency. As stated in the very first paragraph, NCT debuted in 2016, and since that time, it has grown with its fandom, especially since gaining more popularity after releasing its full studio album 'Hot Sauce.' So, for this research, it is needed some relevant informants will answer the research question, which talks about the perception of digital activities within NCT fans that affects fanatic behavior. Therefore, there are six informants who are ready and able to join the interview session, which will help the researcher in finding information about fandom's digital activity life and its effect; they are:

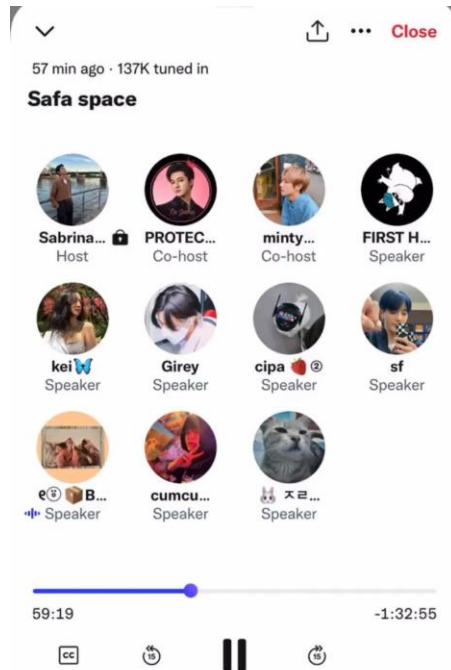
Table 2. 1 Informants Profile

NO.	NAME	INFORMATION	ROLE
1.	Renita Dwi Anjani	Female, 21, From Bekasi, Fan of NCT since 2017	College Student
2.	Tsabita Alistya Nadirani	Female, 22, From Magelang, Fan of NCT since 2016	College Student
3.	Feby Diah Ekawati	Female, 21, From Jakarta, Fan of NCT since 2016	College Student
4.	Ariana	Male, 22, From Bekasi, Fan of NCT since 2020	College Student

5.	Dewi Puspitarini Larasati	Female, 22, From Bekasi, Fan of NCT since 2019	College Student
6.	Rani Rihatri Tjahjono	Female, 21, From Purwokerto, Fan of NCT since 2016	College Student

The Safa Space also occurred on Twitter, which specifically used the ‘Space’ feature. Space feature is a feature that provides an audio live stream connection for everyone, similar to Instagram’s live, but Space is in vocals-only mode. People can interact by talking to each other or even just being listeners to the host doing the space livestream. Lately, this feature has also been used for discussion sessions so that many people can connect with each other. There is no specific requirement for account users to join any space room because every space room made by a certain host will become public. This is also the reason that this research needs informants who are familiar with and actively using the Twitter platform to find out their perceptions of the effect of the digital activity that happened on that platform.

It can be seen that Sabrina hosted this space, with so many people involved in this situation, either becoming a speaker or just even a listener. The number of listeners in this space almost reached 150k, with a duration of around 2 hours on air. The main topic that is being discussed in the space room is about getting Safa to clarify and apologize after everything she has done, which is throwing hate speech toward NCT Dream’s members, Na Jaemin and also Hwang Renjun. The most outstanding speaker in this space was user @Berflowerrr, who made a controversial statement about Safa. During the discussion session, she made an unusual statement, claiming to represent Na Jaemin and Hwang Renjun and intending to escalate the fan war caused by Safa into a legal matter. As a result of this statement, the public became angry with Berflowerrr rather than Safa. The public assumed that Berflowerrr’s statement was overreacting since Safa had already apologized for everything she did. After the incident, Berflowerrr’s statement became a joke within the entire fandom, as they found it amusing that such a statement came from mature fans.



Picture 2. 3 Screenshot of Safa Space Forum
 (Source: screenshotted by X user @miraidrn)



Picture 2. 4 X User Berflowerrr & Sabrina as Space Host
 (Source: screenshotted by X user @helmihelmi)



Picture 2. 5 Public X user sarcastic jokes towards Berflowerrr

(Source: personal screenshot by researcher)

A fanatic phenomenon is a common thing in the fandom world and can be caused by many reasons. It can be happened in every existed fandom in the world. Nowadays, many fans still referred to Safa Space case if its talking about a fanatic behavior despite the case was happened in 2022.



Picture 2. 6 A fan still referred Safa Space about fanatic

(source: personal screenshot by researcher)

The fanatic behavior basically appears because of the feeling of pride that became overproud. This is the common thing that happens in fandom life. Not all fanatical behavior turns out to be negative, but in some cases, it can also be positive. In fact, the majority of fanatic behavior turns out to be negative because after they feel overproud, they become overprotective towards their idol. The fandom does not want their idol to get insulted by any other fandom. All of the bad words spoken towards the idol by another fandom will be turned back by its fandom to protect the idol. It is causing a digital war between fandom, which can be called a fan war. There are still many things that cause people to become fanatic fans of their idols; either they feel so love or even comfortable with their zone as fandom. This research will find out the perception of fandom, which things, and what kind of behavior can be labeled as a fanatic.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS

In this stage of the research, the researcher will explain the findings and discuss them after conducting the interview session with some relevant informants to gain the data. The interview session was mostly done by conducting a Zoom meeting, but one informant was meeting face to face. The researcher also got additional data from informants after filling in a few questions on the Google Forms. The findings will be described in the discussion phase to obtain the result for this research about “Perception of Digital Activities Within NCT Fans That Affect Fanatic Behavior.” To gain data, the researcher used an interview with the fandom of the Korean pop idol group NCT.

A. Informants Profile

1. General Overview Profile

Below is the recap of general informants who have been asked few questions related to the topic of research.

Table 3. 1 Informants Identity

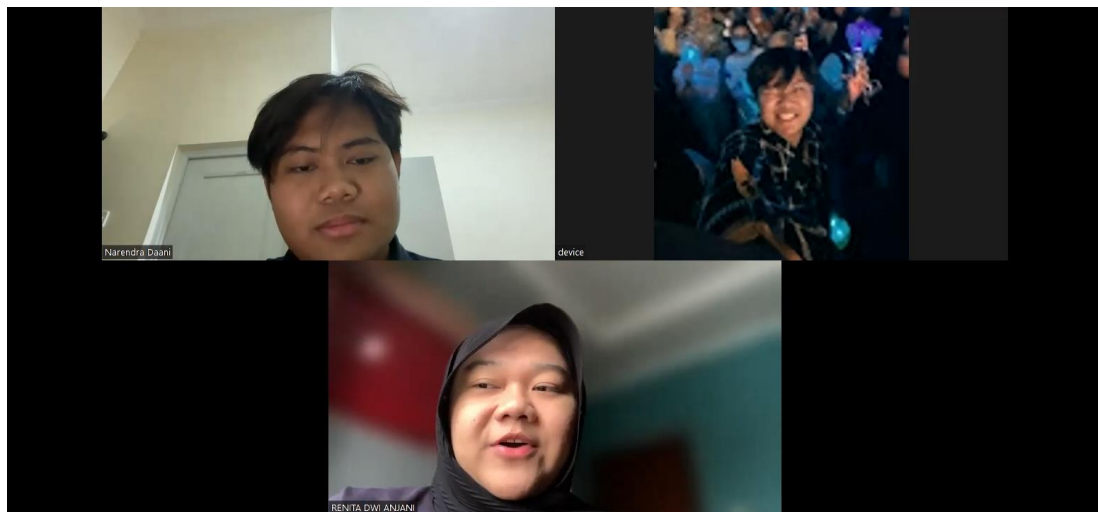
NO.	NAME	INFORMATION	ROLE
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4.	Ariyana	Male, 22, From Bekasi, Fan of NCT since 2020	College Student

5.	Dewi Puspitarini Larasati	Female, 22, From Bekasi, Fan of NCT since 2019	College Student
6.	Rani Rihatri Tjahjono	Female, 21, From Purwokerto, Fan of NCT since 2016	College Student

2. Detail Profile

To make it specific in findings phase, the researcher divided the data by each informants one by one as written below alongside with the answers of informants from the Google Forms,

a. Informant I: Renita Dwi Anjani



Picture 3. 1 Interview with Renita

The first informant being interviewed was Renita Dwi Anjani, often called by her nickname Reni. She is a 21-year-old from Bekasi who now lives in Yogyakarta and studies at the Faculty of Business of Universitas Islam Indonesia. Reni, an NCT fan (often called NCTzen), became a fan in 2017 and follows all of NCT's social media accounts. As a fan who contributes to consuming the idol's content, Reni stated that she spent 2-3 hours a day engaging and watching the NCT's content. In Google Forms, Reni also stated that her hobby is reading comics or novels, which is

related to the statement that she loves textual content on digital platforms. She hopes she can meet her idol in the near future.

At the beginning of the interview, the researcher asked Reni for her opinion on being part of a fandom. Reni responded that she is proud to be part of the fandom and grow alongside the idol. Reni proudly answers the question without any doubt.

“Hmm, for me, become a part of fandom make me feel proud because I followed that idol group since their first debut, so its like I can see their growth which make me feel happy also proud that they have come this far.” (Interview with Renita, on January 19th 2024)

[“Hmm, kalo pendapat aku sih, aku bagian dari fandom tersebut tuh aku merasa bangga menjadi bagian fandom tersebut karena aku tuh kan ngikutin grup tersebut tuh udah dari awal mereka debut, jadi kayak ngeliat perkembangan mereka itu sangat membuat aku senang juga bangga mereka udah sejauh itu gitu.”]

Reni actively participates on various digital platforms such as Twitter, TikTok, and Instagram. Out of those three platforms, Reni stated that she prefers Twitter to the other platforms, which is easy to access and comfortable. The reason is that Twitter makes it easier and faster to gain information. The other supporting reason is that Twitter also contains a lot of textual content, even though it also contains visual content such as photos and videos.

Continuing the interview, the researcher asked Reni about digital activity and what she knows about it. “Digital activity, as I know, is every activity which is being done on the internet and social media.” (Renita, on January 19th, 2024). Reni added that the activities she did on Twitter, such as tweeting, retweeting, and liking posts, were the same as the other digital platforms. After doing those kinds of activities, Reni stated that she claimed to have done the digital activities. Reni even stated that doing the digital activities as a fandom is really helpful for her to gain information about the idol and do other activities such as selling and buying the official merchandise.

“Because, absolutely I need the information. For the sell-buy interaction also needed for me when I want to buy something then I will find it on Twitter maybe there is a seller who sell the stuff. In another case, I want to sell a stuff, then I can sell it on Twitter, much easier for me.” (Interview with Renita, on January 19th 2024)

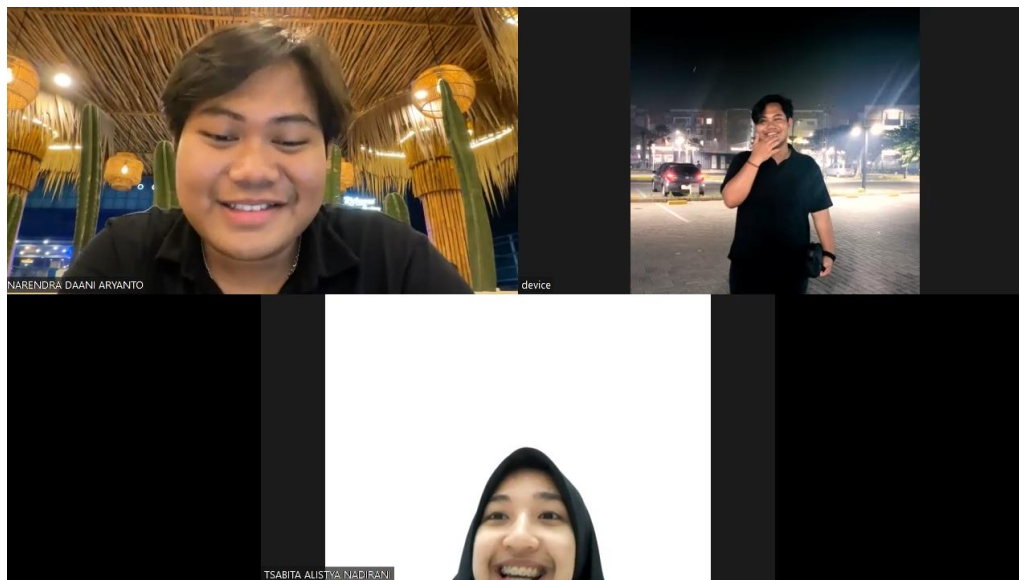
[“Karena, pertama tentu aja aku tuh butuh kan sama informasi tersebut. Kalo misal yang interaksi jual-beli ya tentu aku juga butuh kayak misalnya aku pengen beli ini gitu yaudah aku cari aja di Twitter siapa tau ada yang

jual. Kalo ngga, aku mau jual barang, jual aja di Twitter, kan itu lebih mudah juga, gitu sih.”]

The researcher also asked Reni about the opinion towards the Safa Space which is a case that happened in 2022. She stated that the case was caused by a trivial problem which can be solved by doing a personal communication between the involved parties rather than make it big problem, she found it as funny case at the end.

At the end of interview, Reni gave closing statement for fandom when doing digital activities to be more careful with the words and typing on social media, and better to spread positivity to others in digital platforms.

b. Informant II: Tsabita Alistya Nadirani



Picture 3. 2 Interview with Nadin

The next informant is still a college student from Universitas Islam Indonesia majoring in the Faculty of Medicine, namely Tsabita Alistya Nadirani, who goes by the nickname Nadin. Nadin is 22 years old from Magelang and currently lives in Yogyakarta. Nadin is a fan who has a hobby of reading and listening to music. She followed all of NCT's social media accounts and became a fan of NCT in 2016 after seeing NCT's content on EXO's variety show. Nadin spent around 3 hours a day of her time to watch NCT content on all platforms. Based on Nadin's answer on Google Forms, Nadin said that she loves visual content rather than textual content because she can see the real situation of the idol. She also hopes that she can go to NCT's concert and get the

chance to do a fan sign with the members of the idol. Fan sign is an event that has face-to-face session with the idol alongside the idol giving a handwritten sign on the album for all the fans who joined the event.

When Nadin was asked about her opinion of being a fandom, Nadin stated that she is a fan of various NCT units but prefers NCT Dream only. Nadin admits that she followed NCT daily activities, but not that deeply, since she is also busy studying as a medical student. The update post from Idol influenced Nadin in doing digital activity and ignored non-sense things such as the fan war. For example, Nadin also uses the Bubble platform, a specific platform for idols and fans to interact with each other. A fan who uses the Bubble platform has to subscribe and pay about Rp59.000 per month. Nadin once subscribed to the platform and then ended it after two months because she thought that the high price was not suitable for a student.

Nadin prefers to use Twitter, which is much faster for her to access. Nadin thinks that Twitter makes it easy to connect to the fandom world and enjoys using it for fangirling. Asking about the topic of digital activity, Nadin stated that digital activity has various forms, such as fandom interaction and even a sell-buy transaction on certain platforms. Not only doing digital activities, Nadin also said to the researcher that she has been to NCT Dream's concert, which was held in 2023 at ICE BSD, Tangerang.

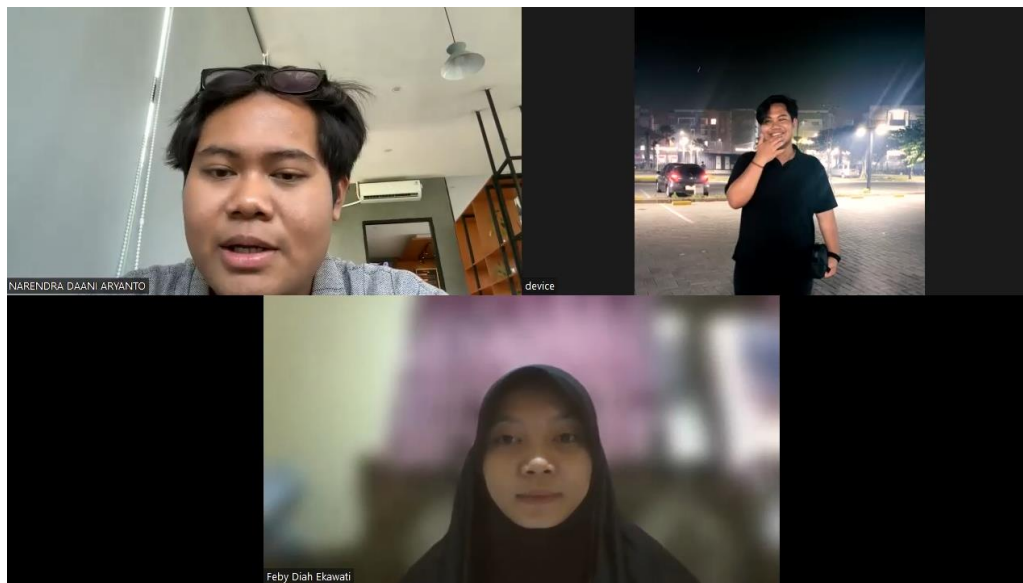
Moving on to the next questions, the researcher asked Nadin about the Safa Space case. Nadin knows about the case, but since she stated that she is a fan who always ignores non-sense things such as fan war, Nadin does not go deeper and does not join the space from the very beginning; she only knows the details of the case from other people's comment on Twitter. Nadin prefers to ignore and do RnB, which stands for 'Report and Block' and inform the fanbase.

"...if we face that kind of case, actually we can do RnB, which is Report and Block, to make the hate account disappear. Now, there is a fanbase namely 'Report Member' so in that account will give information about account that needs to get RnB together, so that we don't need to do a space forum etc." (Interview with Nadin, on January 29th 2024)

["...kalo kayak gitu sebenarnya cukup dengan RnB aja ngga sih, kayak report and block, buat ngehilangin akun hate speech itu. Sekarang ada namanya fanbase namanya tuh 'Report Member' jadi disitu buat kayak infoin kalo ada akun-akun yang perlu di RnB bareng-bareng, nah semisal ada kayak gitu tuh ngga perlu ada space lah."]

Nadin gave a closing statement for fandom to suit and make fandom life as healthy as it can and support the idol appropriately. If the same case happened about someone throwing hate towards the idol, just report it to the fanbase and even do a self-report to the agency who has control of the idol.

c. Informant III: Feby Diah Ekawati



Picture 3. 3 Interview with Feby

The next informant is a 21 years old girl from Jakarta who lives in Bekasi, named Feby Diah Ekawati, also known as Feby. She is a college student majoring in accountancy from Universitas Gunadarma, Bekasi. Her casual hobby is to watch movies or series on the digital streaming platform. The fact that Feby spent around 3-4 hours long to see the content of NCT on the digital platforms. The very first time Feby acknowledged NCT was from NCT U's The 7th Sense music video and became a fan in 2016. Feby stated that she prefers visual content so that she can see the members clearly in visuals. As a fan, Feby stated that she wants to watch NCT's concert and can meet with the idol in person.

The researcher asked Feby her opinion on being a fandom, and she answered it was fun because she could make new friends and even support each other. As a fandom, Feby usually used four platforms: Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok. Then, the researcher asked which one she most frequently used and it is Instagram and Twitter. Out of those two platforms, Instagram is the one that Feby use the most. "Instagram, because I often opened Instagram, now there are much

fanbase on Instagram who upload idol's daily activities.” (Feby, on January 30th 2024). The researcher asked an additional question on why she chose Instagram rather than Twitter, and she answered that actually it is the same but for her Instagram much easier since it can upload photos and videos. “It is the same actually, but it's much easier and it can upload photos and videos as well.” (Feby, on January 30th 2024).

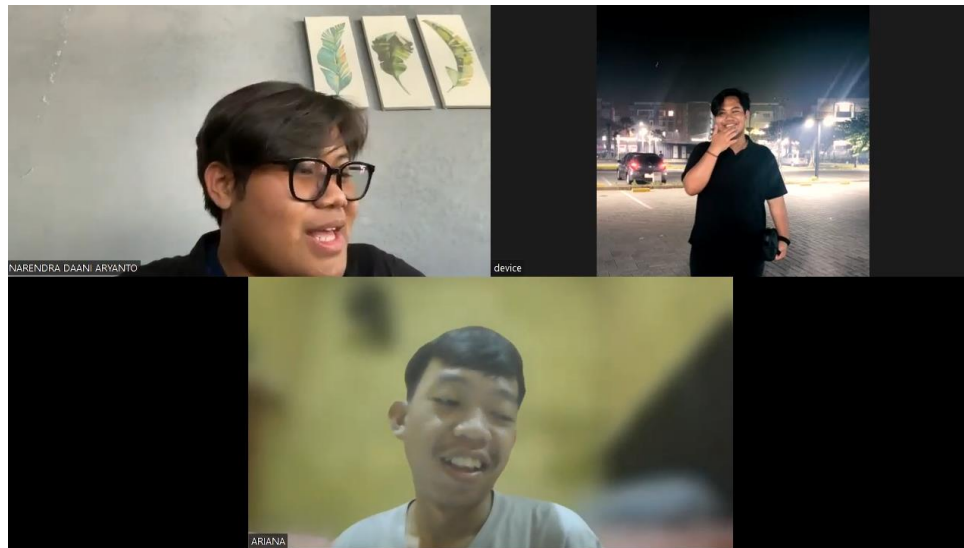
Feby engages in digital activities on social media, such as posting random content about her idol, streaming music on YouTube, or occasionally buying items from online shops. These activities can make her feel proud and happy because from streaming can increase the views for the idol.

Regarding the next question about the Safa Space, Feby thinks that the case was really blunder and weird. The situation exceeded the boundaries of fandom, as it involved real-life situations, activities, and people. Feby tells her opinion that we can help Safa by apologizing and deleting the account and avoiding overreacting, as we are just fans. Feby stated at the end to be more aware of words in digital platforms, which can cause a digital war.

“This Safa Space is a blunder. NCTzen and other fandom even knows that Safa is wrong but they think that the case was out of limit if (Safa) has to create an apology video with her parents, because our parents did not know what we actually do. We can help her by saying sorry and delete account maybe, but we cannot over reacted because we are just fans. That's totally weird case, luckily it passed by and there is no continuity because it can tarnish the good name of fandom if the case grew bigger.” (Interview with Feby, on January 30th 2024)

[“*Safa Space ini terlalu blunder ya. NCTzen dan fandom lain pun tau ya kalo si Safa ini salah tapi sebagai fans menganggap ini tuh udah melewati batas kalo sampe disuruh minta maaf video dan bawa-bawa orang tua, orang tua juga ngga tau ya kita tuh sebenarnya ngapain. Kita bisa aja bantu dengan cara Safa minta maaf dan hapus akun mungkin ya, tapi kita ngga bisa melebih-lebihkannya karena kita cuman fans. Itu udah aneh banget kasusnya, jadi untung berjalan kayak gitu aja sih ngga ada kelanjutan apa-apa lagi, itu juga bisa mencoreng nama baik fandom kan kalo kasusnya semakin besar.*”]

d. Informant IV: Ariyana



Picture 3. 4 Interview with Ariyana

The next informant is a 22 years old boy from Bekasi who is currently studying at Universitas Gunadarma, namely Ariyana. He became a fan of NCT because his hobby has been listening to music and watching content from YouTube since late 2020, when he officially claimed himself as NCTzen. Ari also stated that he loves visual content rather than textual content because he can see the members' faces. Unlike the other informant, Ari spent his time watching NCT's content for only around 1 hour. As a fan, the impact on Ari's life is a positive thing. He became a fan in the era when the COVID-19 virus was increasing, so he went through the quarantine era by watching NCT's content, which gave him a happy mood and not stressing about the quarantine era. Ari also stated that being a fandom is much better than not becoming a toxic fan and avoiding all the negative things. He stated that he really wants to see and watch the NCT's concert.

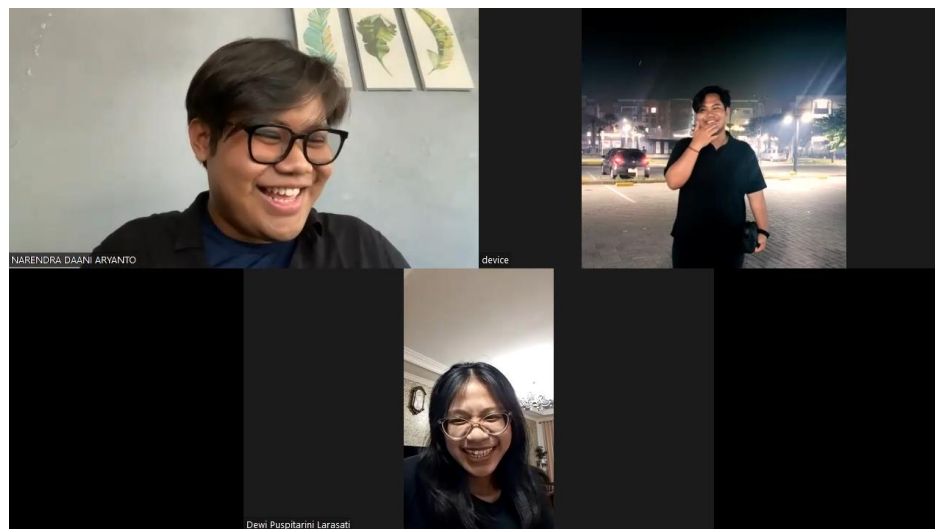
Ari is also using digital platforms for fandom activities, such as Twitter, TikTok, and Instagram. From those three platforms, Ari chose Twitter as the most accessible and comfortable platform to use because he feels that Twitter can get the newest information as soon as possible it can. Like the other informants, Ari was asked what he knows about digital activity, and he answered it was social media activities such as posting, reposting, and even tweeting on Twitter.

Ari's opinion towards Safa Space is quite interesting. He stated that liking the idol should be normal and not overrated, even people can tell Safa to remind her, but not in a digital public space. People can remind Safa in private and tell them all the problems she faced at that time. Ari also added a closing statement so that fans would not be too fanatic because the idol is just doing their job.

“Actually, it's okay to like idols, but don't do it like that, you can shout or remind people, but it's not in 'space' either, that's for the public and everyone can hear, in my opinion that's not good and shouldn't be done.” (Interview with Ariyana, on February 1st 2024)

[*“Sebenarnya boleh ya suka sama idol tapi tuh jangan sampe kayak segitunya gitu loh, boleh si ngelabrak atau mengingatkan orang tapi ya ngga di 'space' juga, kan itu buat publik dan semua orang bisa dengar, menurut saya itu ngga baik dan ngga seharusnya dilakukan.”*]

e. Informant V: Dewi Puspitarini Larasati



Picture 3. 5 Interview with Dewi

Dewi Puspitarini Larasati, also known as Dewi, is a 22 years old girl from Bekasi who is currently studying at Universitas Bhayangkara Jakarta Raya. Dewi loves music, so her hobby is listening to music, especially NCT's music because she has been a fan since 2019. She followed all of NCT's social media accounts and also got updates from the idol. She spent around 2 hours long in a day engaging and consuming the NCT's content on the digital platforms. Dewi became a fan for the first time because of seeing NCT's content through SMROOKIES YouTube. As a

fan, she loves visual content rather than textual content and also hoped that all of NCT's masterpieces would gain more recognition in public.

Being in a fandom, Dewi feels happy to meet other people who share the same interests. It enables interaction between her and other people who become friends with her. "It feels happy because we have the same interest, so it makes the interaction between us so far." (Dewi, on February 1st, 2024). The researcher also asked Dewi about factors that influenced her in doing digital activity as a fandom, and she stated that a fandom has the same understanding about the idol, so it feels connected to them, and even there is emotional support from inner feelings to support the idol's masterpiece.

To support her activities as a fandom, Dewi also used several digital platforms, since she has been a fan of K-pop music. For the first time, she used Facebook. On Facebook, the scope is not that big since it requires one to join a 'Community' feature, which talks only about NCT, while Twitter has a broader scope and is also easy to access as well as get information faster. It makes it easier to interact with other fans either by replying to their post or even just reposting. Those are a few reasons why, in the end, Dewi prefers to choose and is more comfortable on Twitter rather than Facebook or any other platform.

The researcher also asked Dewi about digital activity and what she knew about it, and she answered that she was not too familiar with this term as far as she knows that digital activity is an activity being done through digital media, such as browsing and searching the update information about bias or idol by finding keyword in search-bar, scrolling timeline or homepage or the trending topic. She usually does those things to fill up her time and find a happy mood when she feels tired of the things that she is working on. By this, Dewi admits to doing digital activities and can even lift up her mood by seeing her favorite idol.

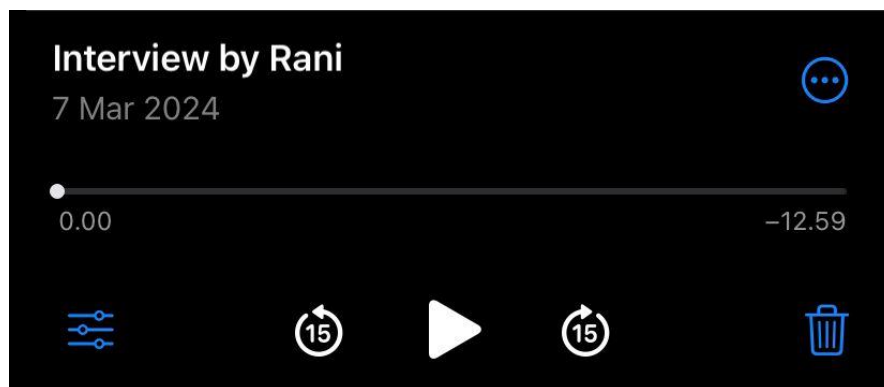
"Yes, often. Or maybe when I'm feeling bored with work or something, so I just look for activities in the search bar or their meme (NCT Dream) like that, just to lift my mood, hehe." (Interview with Dewi, on February 1st 2024)

[*"Iya, sering malah. Atau mungkin aku lagi ngerasa jenuh sama tugas atau apa, aku jadi kayak langsung cari aja di search bar activity apa atau cara meme mereka (NCT Dream) kayak gitu, untuk membangun mood aku aja sih hehe."*]

After trying to know what digital activity is according to her understanding, the researcher still continued and moved on to the next question about Safa Space, just like the researcher did to the other informants; Dewi answered and felt that the case was overrated. To her, as a public figure, it is normal to have haters because no one in this world will have the same interests and opinions. Dewi stated if that case can cause harm to a certain party, everyone can use the trending topic feature to make it viral so that the agency can know and acknowledge it. As a fan, there is no need to mind a case like this; the fan should just enjoy the idol's content.

Before closing the interview session, Dewi also gave a statement to the fandom at the end of the session. Dewi stated that fans have to be less obsessed with idols because they can also derive negative things from life. Make it as happy and good things by seeing favorite idol and when enjoying music by an idol. If the same case happens in the future, do not involve yourself in the case. Avoid all of the bad things and just get the positivity as a fandom that is active in doing activities on digital platforms. As a fan since 2019, Dewi has never involved herself in those kinds of things, such as digital fan war, which can have a negative impact on her life, so she enjoys NCT's content to make her day and lifting mood up.

f. Informant VI: Rani Rihatri Tjahjono



Picture 3. 6 Interview with Rani

The next informant is Rani Rihatri Tjahjono, also known as Rani, a 21 year old girl from Purwokerto who is currently studying at Universitas Islam Indonesia. Rani loves to watch movies either at the cinema or through digital streaming platforms. Not only engage with the movie content, Rani is also up to date on music content, especially music by NCT. Rani has been a fan of NCT since 2016, which is the debut year of the group, and has known them for the first time on YouTube.

Since then, she also followed NCT's social media accounts to get the latest information from them. She stated that she spent her time in a day watching NCT's content for about 3 hours long per day. Rani loves visual content because she can look at her favorite idol. As a fan, Rani hoped that all of her idols could always be healthy since the idols always have many schedules and are busy entertaining all of the fans, especially Rani as a fan.

The researcher asked what her opinion of being in a fandom, and she answered that being a fan makes her life more fun, and she does not have any clue what to do in this life if she does not have any interest in the idols and becoming a fan to join the fandom, the life would be bored. Rani said that she answered because she feels that she needs to consume content from digital media or digital platforms so that she can maintain her happy mood. When the researcher asked about which platforms she used, she answered Twitter, which is now also known as X. She stated that the fandom she joined is more crowded on Twitter. Getting information about the idol and interacting with other fans is the reason why Rani chose Twitter rather than other digital platforms. Rani also mentioned Instagram is only used for her to do the sell-buy transaction of merchandise.

The researcher also want to know on Rani's opinion about digital activity and what she knows about it. Similar with the other informants, Rani answered that digital activity is an activity on digital platform which is social media such as interacting with other fan and even the sell-buy transaction activity.

“As far as I know, digital activity is like our activities on digital platforms, like on social media, for example, we interact with our fandom friends via Twitter, that means digital activity, or now what's really happening is selling stuff like photocards and figures like that on Twitter too is called digital activity.” (Interview with Rani, on March 7th 2024)

[*“Setau aku digital activity itu kayak aktivitas kita di platform digital gitu ya di sosial media, misalnya kita berinteraksi dengan teman satu fandom kita melalui Twitter ya itu berarti digital activity, atau sekarang yang lagi rame nih jualan-jualan kayak photocard dan figure gitu di Twitter juga disebut digital activity.”*]

Like the other informants, the researcher asked Rani for her opinion of Safa Space. Rani said that the case was too weird and stated that the certain party in that case should not be using her power to abuse someone under her. Rani really hates someone when they are using their power to abuse anybody else. A case like this should not be a bigger case since it also has a bad impact

on the fandom itself. At the end of the interview session, Rani stated that as a fan, do not become a fan who always defends the idol, just like to defend a country.

“I think it's really weird and the person who is the mother of seven dreams (the party who is fighting against Safa) shouldn't use her power to abuse people who are lower than her, namely Safa. The problem which was in the space, Safa were threatened for doxing and her parents wanted to be demoted from their positions just for hating K-Pop idols, even though there's no correlation in this problem. So, I think it's very unfortunate because power abuse like that, I don't like seeing it.” (Interview with Rani, on March 7th 2024)

[*“Menurutku aneh banget dan tidak seharusnya orang itu si bunda seven dreams itu (pihak yang melawan Safa) menggunakan powernya untuk abuse orang yang lebih di bawah dia yaitu Safa. Soalnya pas di space Safa sampe diancam buat doxing dan orang tuanya mau diturunin jabatan cuman perkara ngehate idol K-Pop padahal itu ngga ada korelasinya kan. Jadi kayak menurutku sangat disayangkan si soalnya power abuse gitu, ngga suka ngeliatnya.”*]

B. Perception of Fandom

Being in a fandom means that almost all of the activities can be done together virtually. It can have various impacts on certain fans, whether positive or negative. It can influence a fan's mood for a short period or a long period. The NCT fandom, also known as NCTzen, has grown year by year. The usual activities that fandom does include supporting the idol and streaming the music. There are still many activities in a fandom that can give personal feelings toward each person. Most of the people who join a fandom would be happy and enjoy being there. It can lift their mood up seeing their favorite idol and have many new friends.

“Hmm, for me, become a part of fandom make me feel proud because I followed that idol group since their first debut, so it is like I can see their growth which make me feel happy also proud that they have come this far.” (Interview with Renita, on January 19th 2024)

[*“Hmm, kalo pendapat aku sih, aku bagian dari fandom tersebut tuh aku merasa bangga menjadi bagian fandom tersebut karena aku tuh kan ngikutin grup tersebut tuh udah dari awal mereka debut, jadi kayak ngeliat perkembangan mereka itu sangat membuat aku senang juga bangga mereka udah sejauh itu gitu.”*]

“Absolutely fun, because we can make friends with new people. Except being get entertained by our idols, we can also get entertained by fellow fandom mates, supporting each other as well.” (Interview with Feby, on January 30th 2024)

[“Pasti seru ya, karena bisa berteman dengan orang baru. Selain dihibur sama idolnya, juga bisa dihibur sama teman-teman satu fandom, juga saling support.”]

The feeling of happiness had so much positive impact as a fan while interacting with each other and even possibly making new friends. From stranger to friend is a unique point here since, in a fandom, there are so many different characteristics for each person. In a fandom in which there will be so many people in it, of course, there are various characteristics of each of them as well. The reason why a fandom can get along with each other is because there is high enthusiasm for each person towards the idols, which gives a fan the same understanding of feelings. The variety can be a loyal person, toxic, funny, creative, and even fanatic as well. “Loyal, and also love to explore because we need efforts to get concert ticket and even teamwork.” (Feby, on January 30th 2024). Another informant also added that there are royal and toxic people in the fandom world: “So many royal people, as well as the toxic. Yeah, that’s the positive and negative” (Ariyana, on February 1st 2024). The toxic one refers to a fan who claimed to be a fanatic fan.

“As far as I see that they have the same high enthusiasm, for example when our bias idol have update and the fandom will get excited “oh my god he updates, oh my god he is so handsome” like that. Then, second is creative, because for now there are a lot of alternative universe, alternative universe is like a fan-fiction story which created by the fans. Then, the third is they are so loyal towards their idol, definitely high loyal. Well that’s it that I see from them.” (Interview with Dewi, on February 1st 2024)

[“Yang aku liat selama ini sih kayak mereka sama-sama punya antusiasme yang tinggi gitu, misalkan kayak bias update mereka kayak saling menggebu-gebu “oh my god dia update, oh my god dia ganteng banget” gitu-gitu. Terus, kedua tuh kreatif, karena sekarang kan lagi banyaknya alternative universe, alternative universe itu kayak fan-fiction cerita yang dibuat oleh fansnya gitu kan. Nah terus, sama yang ketiga tuh mereka pada setia banget kayak loyalitas mereka terhadap bias mereka tuh tinggi banget, kuat banget gitu. Udah sih itu aja yang aku liat dari mereka.”]

A toxic fan is a fan who always spreads negative activities to others. It can be a solo stan who only loves and support one certain idol and bring the other idols down, which can cause a digital war. This can be categorized as the fanatic fan. Not all of the fans are toxic because the other can express their love and support towards idols in many positive ways. However, in this case, informants in this research stated and found out that fanatic fans are really weird. “Actually, fanatic behavior towards the idol is really weird.” (Rani, on March 7th 2024). Another informant

said to the researcher that fanatic behavior is a negative thing that can lead to harmful obsession and can bother other people.

“Actually, fanaticism can be said to be a negative behavior, because we should be joining a fandom or liking our idols for fun, but instead it becomes an obsession which can be detrimental, or the frequent habits of fanatical fans can also trigger wars between fans.” (Interview with Dewi, on February 1st 2024)

[*“Sebenarnya fanatik tuh bisa dibilang perilaku negatif ya, karena harusnya kita tuh kan masuk fandom atau suka sama idol kita tuh sebagai kesenangan, tapi malah jadi obsesi yang malah ngerugiin, atau keseringan kebiasaan fans fanatik itu juga bisa memicu war gitu sesama penggemar.”*]

The informants stated that fanatics could be caused by feelings of overrated love towards the idol so that fanatic appears. The overrated feeling leads to an aggressive feeling of getting close to the idol instead of supporting the idol as a fan. “It can be said as obsession or fanatic, because the overrated love to the bias, so that become a fanatic” (Dewi, on February 1st 2024). It possibly can happen because fanatic fans feel that the idol really matches them in any aspect and always gives them positive energy. “They feel like their idol could give a positive energy which makes them survive, so from that maybe makes them think to idolize that idol.” (Ariyana, on February 1st, 2024). The overrated love that turns into an obsession makes a fan want to know more about the idol’s personal life, and daily activities can be categorized as crossing personal privacy. “It is usually because of the obsession towards the idol; they wanted to know everything as well as the idol’s personal things.” (Feby, on January 30th, 2024). The researcher is trying to see from another point of view from the informant that said fanatic fans can be caused by the addiction of idols. Addiction appears because of the feeling of comfort towards the idols, which can support a fan during sad times and encourage them with supporting words.

“Maybe this is it, from what I feel and what I see, our idols are like giving them a comfortable place for them. So, it's like when a person is feeling down, the idol is there to cheer them up, so sometimes the idol on the platform gives encouragement, says don't forget to eat, and so on. Maybe the fan felt like he was down and his condition wasn't good and finally received words of encouragement from his idol, such as save their lives. In the end, it's like feeling that if you don't have an idol, you'll feel sadder, maybe it's an addiction.” (Interview with Nadin, on January 29th 2024)

[*“Mungkin ini ya kalo dari apa yang aku rasain dan aku liat, jadi idol kita itu kayak ngasih tempat yang nyaman mungkin buat mereka. Jadi kayak ketika orang itu lagi down, nah idol itu ada untuk menyemangati mereka,*

jadi idol itu kadang kan kalo di platform itu ngasih semangat, ucapan jangan lupa makan, dan lain-lain. Nah mungkin fans tersebut merasa pas lagi down dan kondisi sedang tidak baik akhirnya mendapat kata-kata penyemangat dari idolnya semacam save their lives. Akhirnya kayak merasa kalo ngga ada idol itu bakal merasa lebih sedih, ya mungkin itu ketergantungan.”]

Fanatic fans can have a bad impact on other fans, such as feeling uncomfortable. “For me, sometimes it is really annoying.” (Renita, on January 19th 2024). No one can feel comfortable if someone mocks their favorite idol, and that always makes noise while everything is peaceful. The behavior of crossing idol’s personal privacy and also the overrated love for them tends to create a digital war in a fandom. Informants said if the love towards the idol was normal, it was a good thing instead of being so aggressive in getting to know the idol’s life deeper.

“It's good if we only support and express our form of love into we just support them, but if it comes to the point of stalking or defending too much so that it triggers a war among fans, I think that's negative behavior.” (Interview with Dewi, on February 1st 2024)

[“Itu bagus kalo misalkan kita cuman mendukung bentuk cinta kita tuh sekedar mendukung mereka aja gitu, tapi kalo misalkan sampai kayak menguntit atau terlalu berlebihan membela sehingga memicu war sesama penggemar menurut saya itu perilaku yang negatif.”]

An informant even said that fanatic behavior is also a useless thing that started from an overrated love and admiration of the idol. Some also added this behavior could lead someone to do extreme things, which are categorized as negative things on digital platforms, like cyber-bullying, harassment, and again stalking behavior, which crosses the idol’s personal life. A fan should be a normal fan who only supports the idol in a good way and not do things that tend to hurt other people’s feelings.

“For me, the overrated behavior in fangirling is useless, like why we have to like one person but make other idol looks bad and make other people do not liking our idol.” (Interview with Nadin, on January 29th 2024)

[“Menurut aku perilaku over dalam fangirling itu useless sih, kenapa kita menyukai satu orang tapi malah membuat idol lain terlihat jelek dan malah membuat orang lain ngga suka sama idol kita.”]

“Most of fanatic behavior must related to negative behavior because the overrated admiration which can arise extreme things such as cyber bullying, verbal or non-verbal harassment, and the worst thing is stalking.” (Interview with Feby, on January 30th 2024)

[“Kebanyakan kalo fanatic behavior kan pasti berkaitan sama perilaku negatif ya karena kekaguman yang berlebihan juga bisa menimbulkan hal-hal yang ekstrim kayak cyber bullying, pelecehan verbal atau non-verbal juga bisa, dan yang paling parah sih stalking.”]

C. Perception of Digital Activity

The rapid growth of technology really makes many changes in social life. Society can do anything in the form of digital, which is much easier and faster to do. All of the digital activities can be done on various digital platforms such as social media, and the tools are mostly used on smartphones. Relating to the context of digital fandom means they can interact with each other virtually through digital platforms. Supporting, cheering up, and even hyping the idol can be done on social media, too. “Digital activity is like activities on the internet; there are various kinds of it such as interacting between fandom, there is also a sell-buy activity in certain platform.” (Nadin, on January 29th 2024). People can even do online transactions to buy stuff or goods. Those activities can be said to be digital activities.

“As I know digital activity is our activities on digital platform which is social media, for example we interact with our friend in fandom through Twitter so that means a digital activity, or maybe something happening nowadays like selling some photocards and figures in Twitter also can be said as digital activity.” (Interview with Rani, on March 7th 2024)

[“Setau aku digital activity itu kayak aktivitas kita di platform digital gitu ya di sosial media, misalnya kita berinteraksi dengan teman satu fandom kita melalui Twitter ya itu berarti digital activity, atau sekarang yang lagi rame nih jualan-jualan kayak photocard dan figure gitu di Twitter juga disebut digital activity.”]

The activities in digital platforms are various and have their own functions. Informants use the digital platform for fandom activities such as interacting with other fans, looking for information about the idol, and even doing online transactions to buy any merchandise. The researcher also got information from one of the informants about the digital platform that can connect the idol group NCT directly to the fans, namely Bubble. Bubble is a specific platform for NCTzen to interact with the NCT group. Basically, it is similar to a texting application in which a fan can send messages to the idol. To access this platform, a fan needs to subscribe and pay about Rp60.000 per month. Fans who do not subscribe to the Bubble application can still access the other digital platforms for free, such as Twitter. Not only can the fans get information about the idol's

activities, but they can also use digital platforms to find something or stuff that they want to buy, such as a concert ticket, and even share information with fellow fans.

“I usually do the digital activities on Twitter such as tweeting, retweeting, or liking post of other people as well as TikTok can create a video and like it, as well as Instagram too for liking video and create Instastory, post, and so on.” (Interview with Renita, on January 19th 2024)

[“Kalo aku paling kayak kalo di Twitter aku melakukan digital activity kayak ngetweet, retweet, atau ngelike postingan orang gitu terus sama juga kayak kalo di TikTok juga bisa membuat video terus bisa ngelike video orang juga gitu, terus sama juga kayak di IG ngelike video terus bikin instastory, postingan, gitu-gitu.”]

“...I DM a lot of people who sell tickets to ask questions and answers with related concert ticket sellers. Apart from that, after getting the tickets, I also prepared everything from outfits and what things I can bring or not to NCT Dream community interactions. There, many people who remembering each other about things related to the concert on the day.” (Interview with Nadin, on January 29th 2024)

[“...saya banyak DM orang yang menjual tiket untuk tanya jawab dengan seller tiket konser terkait. Selain itu juga setelah dapat tiket juga saya persiapan dari mulai outfit dan apa aja hal yang boleh dibawa atau engga di interaksi komunitas NCT Dream. Disitu banyak yang ngingetin hal-hal terkait konser pada hari H.”]

The various functions of digital platforms are really helpful for fandom in doing digital activities. “It is so informative that we can get the latest information about idols and what's happening in the K-Pop world” (Ariyana, February 1st 2024). Another informant also gave the same response, stating that digital activity is really helpful for fans in getting information about the idol. “Really helpful to get information about idol’s daily activities or any updates about their schedule.” (Feby, on January 30th 2024). Fans cannot only get information about the idol but also buy stuff or merchandise from the idol through digital platforms. Another positive impact of digital activities, according to the informant’s point of view, is that doing digital activity on various digital platforms can make them meet and make friends with new people, as well as new insights. “It's really good for me, by digital activity in fandom, can make us meet new people so it's like we also get new insight.” (Rani, on March 7th 2024).

Development of digital platforms also play a role in creating many more digital activities in nowadays era. The variety of new features make people also do various activities in the digital

platforms according to their needs. It facilitates them to interact easier and even do discussion with their friends. The easy access to many new features can make people enjoy to use the digital platforms.

“Development? That is maybe like an ease to upload or getting informations from various platforms such as maybe we know some TikTok videos but we found it on Twitter, so we can see those are different platforms but we can get it in the same place, so it is easy.” (Interview with Renita, on January 19th 2024)

[*“Perkembangan? Itu tuh paling kayak kemudahan dalam meng-upload atau mendapat informasi dari berbagai platform tersebut aja sih kayak misalnya kita tau video TikTok, kita nemu tweet tentang video TikTok, jadi itu kan beda platform tapi kita bisa dapat di satu tempat, jadi mudah.”*]

“There are a lot of features which we accessed, and new features which easier. On Instagram there is feature ‘story’, that feature really helpful. On Twitter also a feature named ‘thread’ which one tweet can be continued and connect to another below tweets.” (Interview with Feby, on January 30th 2024)

[*“Banyak ini ya fitur-fitur yang udah kita akses, dan fitur baru yang bisa lebih mudah gitu. Instagram seperti ‘story’, itu fiturnya sangat membantu juga sih. Di Twitter juga ada namanya ‘thread’ jadi satu postingan bisa berlanjut dan menyambung ke bawah.”*]

The fandom has its own preference for choosing and using digital platforms for their digital activities, such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and still many more. Each platform has its own uniqueness and functions while users operate it. The global reach really helps fandom interact and get new information. In this context, many fandoms use Twitter as their platform for doing digital activities. Twitter is one of the digital platforms in today's era, and it provides various helpful features to users. “I often used Twitter, then TikTok, and last Instagram.” (Renita, on January 19th 2024). “Maybe Twitter and also TikTok.” (Interview with Ariyana, on February 1st 2024). “Actually, I have been in K-Pop for the very first time on Facebook, but maybe for now, my preference is going to be Twitter” (Interview with Dewi, on February 1st 2024). From the interview session, it can be found that besides the many digital platforms out there, most of the informants use Twitter to do digital activities. Twitter is still the one that is being chosen by fandom as the main platform for digital activities. “Yes, I’m on Twitter. I use Instagram only for selling stuff and not too engaging to Instagram for getting and finding information.” (Interview with Rani, on March 7th 2024). The other platforms have their own functions, but Twitter is the one that helps

fans interact and do other things as well as understand the features. “Because it is much easier to gain information and easy to access, and the information is faster to get.” (Renita, on January 19th 2024). It really has many good and helpful features which make it easier for fandom to interact with each other and even get information or the latest updates from their idol.

“The platform that I like to access for fandom activity is Twitter, because Twitter is faster. For example, when its connecting fandom world is really easy, and when a person meets the idol while having an agenda then the info will quickly speard over the Twitter timeline. After Twitter there is Instagram or any other platforms which has ‘repost’ feature, so I feel like more enjoy fangirling using Twitter.” (Interview with Nadin, on January 29th 2024)

[*“Saya lebih suka platform buat akses fandom itu di Twitter, karena Twitter itu kayak lebih cepet gitu loh. Misalnya connecting antar dunia fandomnya itu gampang ya, terus kadang kalo misalnya idol ada acara dimana terus ada yang original person ketemu terus langsung kesebar nya cepet gitu di Twitter. Nanti kalo abis Twitter ada Instagram atau platform lain yang kayak mengunggah ulang, jadi ngerasa lebih enak fangirl pake Twitter.”*]

The researcher also asked informants why they finally decided to do digital activities as fandom. The main thing in doing digital activities as a fandom is looking for fun and joy as well as getting the latest updated information about the idol so that a fan can always follow the idol’s activities and even the upcoming schedule. Some informants said that they feel comfortable by getting new friends that can hype the same idol group together. Doing many kinds of interactions on digital platforms can create a new group of friends who share the same interest in idols things, which makes many fans decide to do fandom digital activities and stay.

D. Perception of Digital Activities Within NCT Fans That Affect Fanatic Behavior

The digital fan war that happened in the space feature of Twitter in 2022 was named Safa Space; this was really chaotic at that time. The case happened because Safa did something wrong by judging another idol that she did not like, and she even had an argument with some people in the forum. The digital war between Safa and the fandom of NCT was full of arguments and hate speech thrown by each other. This happened because of the feeling of belonging towards the idol, so the other fans felt like they did not want the idol to get mocked by any other parties. The user Berflowerrr, who is against Safa, even wants to drag her into a serious legal law form and fix the problem in that way.

“...Safa hates the NCT Dream’s members which are Jaemin and Renjun, and Safa feels that Jaemin and Renjun are too close with Jen0. Well, Safa’s Twitter account are full of hate speech, all of the contents were about hating NCT Dream and NCT 123 at that time if I’m not mistaken. Then, the fans of Na Jaemin and Hwang Renjun did not accept with that hate speech, and finally made the Space. One of party which named Sabrina really cannot accept this and want to drag Safa into law green table, if Safa did not immediately say apologize to the fans, because Sabrina feels that Safa has done commit defamation towards Hwang Renjun and Na Jaemin.” (Interview with Dewi, on February 1st 2024)

[“...Safa ini membenci member NCT Dream yaitu Jaemin dan Renjun, dan Safa ini melihat kalo misalnya Jaemin dan Renjun ini terlalu dekat dengan Jen0. Dan memang di akun Twiternya si Safa ini dia tuh banyak mengujar kebencian, semuanya isinya kebencian tentang NCT Dream dan NCT 127 kalo ngga salah waktu itu. Nah, terus habis itu akhirnya para fans Na Jaemin dan Hwang Renjun tidak terima, akhirnya mereka melakukan Space. Karena saking tidak terimanya, salah satu fans yang tidak terima tuh namanya kalo ngga salah Sabrina, dia ingin mengajak si Safa ini ke meja hijau. Kalo dia ngga ada itikad minta maaf ke para penggemarnya, karena Sabrina ini merasa kalo si Safa ini telah melakukan pencemaran nama Hwang Renjun dan Na Jaemin.”]

The researcher asked informants in this research for their opinions on the case that happened about two years ago. Most of the informants said that Safa Space is overrated and even strange to happen. Another informant said it was a funny case because it started from a trivial problem that could actually be solved personally, but it turned out to become a big problem. “Ya, for me, is so funny, like it’s a trivial problem that can be done personally, but they chose to make it bigger, so it is funny.” (Renita, on January 19th 2024). There is also an informant who said that the behavior of fanatics can be caused by feelings that want to protect the idol’s good reputation, so that is needed to defend the idol from everything.

“I know, maybe her intention is to protect her idol’s good name, maybe she feels like she has to protect NCT Dream. But actually, if she can take it to court and admit to having acquaintances with powerful people, in my opinion, if she’s an adult like that, there’s no need to pay attention to this war. So, it’s like a fanatical attitude as if they are want to protect idols even though the idols don’t even know about trivial things like that, their agencies don’t take care of them as well, why do ordinary people have to do that.” (Interview with Nadin, on January 29th 2024)

[“Saya tau ya mungkin dia niatnya untuk menjaga nama baik idolnya, mungkin dia kayak merasa harus melindungi NCT Dream. Tapi ya sebenarnya kalo dia itu bisa ngebawa sampe ke meja hijau dan ngaku punya

kenalan orang berpower, menurut aku kalau dia udah dewasa kayak gitu nggak perlu diladenin lah sama war gini. Jadi kayak sikap fanatik seakan-akan dia mau melindungi idol padahal idolnya aja nggak tau untuk hal-hal sepele kayak gitu, agensinya juga nggak ngurus kan, ngapain orang biasa sampe segitunya.”]

Continue the question that still relates to Safa Space, the researcher also asked a question about whether this digital war phenomenon can be said to be fanatic behavior towards all of the informants, and surprisingly, all of the informants agreed and also stated that this case can be said as a fanatic behavior in fandom digital life. It can be seen that a person who is willing to do anything for an idol can be claimed as a fanatic phenomenon because it is too overrated as well. Another informant added because the case involved colliding parties just to protect idols, it can be said to be a fanatic phenomenon. Another statement from informants is that the behavior of defending the idol is too much and creates a bad reputation for its fandom. The doxing case thrown by Berflowerrr at Safa also indicates a negative fanatic phenomenon.

“It can be called as fanatic for me, because it is defended idols too much. So, because of this case, those who are not in the NCTzen fandom can know everything, and it's detrimental to fans who are actually NCTzen, so they feel embarrassed. This shouldn't have been taken care of so much, that's why the problem has become so phenomenal.” (Interview with Dewi, on February 1st 2024)

[“Bisa disebut fanatik menurut aku iya, karena terlalu membela idol ya. Jadi karena terjadinya kasus ini, yang bukan fandom NCTzen tuh jadi tau semua, dan itu merugikan fans yang beneran NCTzen, jadi merasa malu gitu. Seharusnya ini nggak diurusin banget gitu, makanya jadi fenomenal booming banget kan masalahnya.”]

“Yes, because the case almost leads to doxing safu which is they really fanatic towards NCT Dream and even want to demote Safa's father job, and even reported it to Golkar party cadre, well this is weird.” (Interview with Rani, on March 7th 2024)

[“Iya karena ya itu yang mau doxing Safa ini tuh dia udah fanatik banget kan sama NCT Dream sampe mau nurunin jabatan bapaknya si Safa, sampe ngadu ke kader Golkar, jadi so weird.”]

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

After conducting an interview session with relevant informants, the researcher will discuss the perception of fandom and digital activity deeper in this stage and relate it to the latest phenomenon in fandom life, which is Safa Space. The discussion will be divided into three parts below:

A. Perception of Fandom

According to Aoki (2022), fandom is the act of supporting something, whether human or non-human, such as an artist, a game character, or a particular brand, and will result in gaining a sense of enjoyment. This is in line with a statement from informants about NCT's fandom, stating that she feels proud to be a part of NCT's fandom and has supported it since its debut in 2016. She has followed the idol group since her teenage phase and has remained with the fandom until now. Another statement also stated that being a fan gives a feeling of joy and excitement, and feels comfortable doing things she is interested in. This means that Aoki's theory is relatable to fandom in today's era. Loyalty towards the favorite artist is also the act of supporting the idol group because, without any fans around the idol, the idol will not go well in the entertainment industry. People who claim themselves as fandom will engage with their favorite things.

The researcher will relate the other theories with the topic being discussed in this research. To perceive something, there are a few stages that people have to go through to sense the object, which will become a perception. Based on Mulyana (2023) there are 3 stages that have to be passed before an object can be perceived:

1. Sensation

The very first step of perceiving an object is through the five senses that humans have, which are sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell, to process the various stimuli. Each sense has an important role in perception because it has a role to fulfill a vital role in perception by transducing environmental stimuli into neural signals that enable the detection and experience of the external world. These sensory gateways acquire raw sensory data, which undergoes higher-order processing in the brain, culminating

in coherent perceptual experiences reflective of our surroundings. Without functional sensory systems, our capacity to directly apprehend and interpret the myriad aspects of the external environment would be severely compromised. Consequently, each sense assumes an indispensable role in facilitating rich, veridical perceptual experiences.

In perceiving to become a fandom, the sight and hearing senses are working together. When someone starts to become a fan of a particular group or performer, it usually begins with their sense of sight. In the case of the fandom being discussed, the informants said that the first thing that attracted them to the K-pop group NCT was seeing how handsome and good-looking the members were. Their visual appearance is what initially drew the fans in. After being captivated by NCT's looks, the fans then decided to listen to their music as well. They put their sense of hearing to use, and it turns out they also really enjoyed NCT's songs and sound. So, not only were the fans attracted to how NCT looked, but they also appreciated their musical talent. Interestingly, most of the fans first encountered and saw NCT not in person but through digital platforms like YouTube. This shows how powerful and influential online video platforms can be in exposing people to new artists and kickstarting fandom. From this, it can be said that sight was the first sense that got people hooked on NCT because of the members' visuals. Then, hearing came next as they appreciated the music. Oftentimes, this whole process started simply by watching NCT videos pop up on YouTube before anything else. The senses of sight and sound, aided by digital platforms, paved the way for fans to discover and immerse themselves in the NCT fandom.

2. Attention

This next stage has a function to select the most attractive stimuli. At the same time, a person can receive various stimuli from the outside. So that the attention stage has a role to choose and pick which stimuli should be more focused on. The picked stimuli will be processed deeply in the next stage of perception which will become the final perception and have the meanings.

A multitude of stimuli can potentially captivate the senses and contribute to an individual's affinity towards a particular musical act or idol group. These stimuli may

encompass factors such as the cultural origins or nationality of the group or even the management practices and treatment of the artists by their respective agencies. However, empirical evidence suggests that fans tend to primarily idolize musical groups like NCT due to two predominant factors: their artistic musical output and the visual appeal of the group members themselves. The process of deciding which factors are most important in becoming a fan of a particular group requires a lot of thought and consideration. Out of all the different things a person sees, hears, and experiences related to the group, they have to carefully think through and evaluate which specific aspects really speak to them the most. It's like a deep contemplation of all the various sights, sounds, and other inputs their senses are taking in. The process of deciding which factors are most important in becoming a fan of a particular group requires a lot of thought and consideration. Out of all the different things a person sees, hears, and experiences related to the group, they have to carefully think through and evaluate which specific aspects really speak to them the most. It's like a deep contemplation of all the various sights, sounds, and other inputs their senses are taking in.

While various external factors may initially spark someone's interest in an idol group, their sustained devotion and deep admiration often depend on their ability to critically examine all the sensory information about the group. Through this discerning evaluation process, the group's artistic talents, both their music (auditory) and visuals, tend to emerge as the primary driving forces behind the individual's lasting sense of fandom and idolization. In other words, while different factors may first grab their attention, fans' enduring adulation stems from closely analyzing the full sensory experience, with the group's artistic musical and visual qualities rising as the most influential in solidifying that intense fandom connection over time.

3. Interpretation

The interpretation stage lies at the heart of the perceptual process. It is during this crucial phase that all sensory information, having successfully traversed the preliminary stages of sensation and attention, undergoes organization and assignment of meaning. The interpretation stage represents the pivotal juncture where the diverse sensory inputs coalesce into a coherent and comprehensible experience.

The interpretation stage of perception is not merely a passive reception of sensory inputs, but an active process that engages the cognitive faculties of each individual. During this phase, the brain plays a vital role in processing and synthesizing the accumulated sensory information to arrive at a final perceptual outcome. In the context of the fandom under investigation, the informants reported that the interpretive stage culminated in emotional responses characterized by a sense of happiness and enjoyment derived from their affiliation with the fandom. This positive emotional state was a direct consequence of the brain's interpretation of the multifaceted sensory stimuli associated with the idol group. Moreover, some informants expressed a profound sense of pride in their status as fans of the particular group, further underscoring the significance of the interpretive process in shaping their overall perception and emotional connection. Additionally, the digital platforms facilitating their fandom engagement served as virtual spaces where they forged new interpersonal connections with fellow enthusiasts, contributing to their positive experiences and interpretations.

Thus, the interpretation stage not only involves the cognitive processing of sensory inputs but also encompasses the emotional and social dimensions of the perceptual experience. The brain's ability to derive meaning from these diverse inputs ultimately shapes the affective and interpersonal outcomes that reinforce and sustain an individual's attachment to a particular fandom.

After understanding the stages how an object can be perceived, Mulyana (2023) also divided a perception into 2 forms, which are:

1. Perception of Objects

When individuals engage in the perceptual process of inanimate objects within their physical surroundings, the interpretation relies exclusively on sensory information obtained through physical cues or signs. In contrast to the perception of animate beings, wherein social, emotional, and contextual factors contribute to the comprehension, the perception of inanimate entities necessitates the sole utilization of raw sensory data acquired by the visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, and gustatory systems. This sensory input serves as the primary source upon which the brain

organizes, processes, and derives interpretations concerning the nature, properties, and potential purpose of the inanimate object. Consequently, the interpretation is contingent upon the individual's ability to synthesize and draw logical inferences from the physical characteristics and sensory stimuli emanating from the object itself. While this process may appear more straightforward than perceiving animate beings, it nonetheless requires sophisticated cognitive operations to translate the sensory inputs into a coherent and meaningful perception of the inanimate entity within the perceiver's physical environment.

In perceiving objects can be in any form such as the official merchandise from the idol. Informants stated that the ownership of such merchandise items, which may encompass a diverse array of products ranging from apparel and accessories to collectibles, engendered a heightened sense of happiness and emotional fulfillment. This phenomenon was attributed to the perceived symbolic value and personal significance ascribed to these material possessions, which served as physical manifestations of the individual's admiration and connection to the idol. Informants further expressed that obtaining and keeping these merchandise items engendered a deep feeling of loyalty and devotion to the idol. Owning such material representations was viewed as a concrete demonstration of the person's steadfast backing and commitment to the idol, going beyond fleeting admiration and signifying a more profound, lasting connection. As a result, possessing these merchandise items was seen as a way to reinforce and reaffirm the individual's sense of loyalty and devotion to the idol, thereby increasing the emotional satisfaction derived from this one-sided relationship.

In essence, the informants' accounts highlighted the psychological and emotional significance ascribed to the possession of idol-related merchandise, which was perceived as a conduit for amplifying happiness and cultivating a profound sense of loyalty towards the revered celebrity figure.

2. Social Perception

The process of perceiving and understanding others transcends mere verbal communication, as it involves interpreting nonverbal cues like facial expressions, body language, and voice intonation, which can be challenging to predict and hold

nuanced meanings. Moreover, social perception entails efforts to comprehend internal characteristics such as emotions, motivations, expectations, and personality traits that shape attitudes and behaviors, going beyond external appearances. Notably, this perceptual process is a two-way interactive exchange, where both parties engage in decoding verbal and nonverbal signals to construct a shared understanding. The interpretation of these cues and the attribution of internal characteristics can be influenced by individual differences, cultural backgrounds, and contextual factors, underscoring the complexity and potential for misunderstanding. Effective social perception requires active listening, attentiveness to nonverbal signals, open communication, and an empathetic approach to navigate the intricate realm of interpersonal perception and foster deeper connections.

This happens to fellow fans in the fandom who are started by strangers and become a friend virtually. Informants stated that strangers in a fandom can be friends since they have the same interests and understanding of the idols so that they can hype idol's content together. The phenomenon of strangers forging virtual friendships within fan communities, or fandoms, is a significant social dynamic. These connections stem from a shared passion and a deep understanding of a particular idol or celebrity, serving as a powerful unifying force that transcends geographical boundaries and personal differences. The creation of shared language and cultural references within the fandom allows members to communicate effectively and resonate with one another's experiences and perspectives. The collective engagement with an idol's content provides a common ground upon which these virtual relationships can flourish. The interactive nature of online platforms and social media facilitates these connections, enabling real-time discussions, collaborative activities, and collective hype-building celebrations centered around the idol. These connections often evolve into meaningful relationships, fostered by the strong emotional bonds and sense of belonging cultivated within the fandom's shared interests and collective experiences. Examining the dynamics within fandoms offers valuable insights into how virtual communities shape interpersonal relationships, foster a sense of community, and facilitate the creation of shared cultural identities in the digital age.

From the explanation above that have been passed by informants in perceiving as a fandom, it was found that informants perceive being a fandom as follows:

1. As Entertainment

In this case of research, the researcher is getting information from the relevant informants who are claimed to be fans of South Korea's idol group, NCT. Informants perceived being a fandom as entertaining since they could see and watch the idol's content. Informants can even feel happy by having the physical object of the idol, which is the official merchandise. This means that being a fandom can give entertainment needs for life.

2. As Social Interaction

Being a fandom in digital era also make them can do digital activities in various digital platforms. Many digital interactions happen between the fan or even to the idol. Digital platform helps informants a lot in doing various activities. In the platforms, informants said that they can find new friends and become a virtual friend with the stranger. Means that being a fandom also help people to do social interaction virtually.

B. Perception of Digital Activities Within NCT Fans That Affect Fanatic Behavior

Wahyuningtyas (2021) stated that various activities on social media, such as sharing, commenting, discussing, debating, and many others, can be said to be digital activities. As well as Asari (2023) also stated that the transferred messages and exchange of content in digital platforms could be said to be digital communication. It is conformable to the informants' statement that digital activity as a fandom in digital platforms involves interacting with other fans, making a post, and reacting to other posts. The statements provided by the informants align with the theories that fandom activities on digital platforms primarily involve interactions among fans. These interactions manifest in various forms, including engaging with other fans through comments, reactions, and discussions. Fans actively participate by creating and sharing content related to their interests, such as posts, artwork, fan fiction, or multimedia. Additionally, a crucial aspect of digital fandom is the ability to express appreciation, support, or criticism towards the shared content by reacting to or commenting on others' posts. This cyclical exchange of content creation and

reaction facilitates a dynamic community where fans can connect, exchange ideas, and foster a sense of belonging centered around their common interests. The digital realm provides a platform for fandom to thrive, enabling fans to explore and celebrate their passions through active engagement and meaningful interactions with like-minded individuals. The researcher will relate the topic with another theory from Fauzi et al (2023) which stated that there are 4 useful benefits in using the digital platforms:

1. Accessibility of information in the digital era

In today's modern era, one of the most striking technological achievements is the presence of the internet as a vast global computer network that has revolutionized how we access and share information. This powerful platform enables users worldwide to effortlessly search and obtain a wealth of knowledge from innumerable sources with just a few clicks. Beyond information retrieval, the internet facilitates seamless communication and collaboration among individuals across geographical boundaries through various applications and platforms. The true strength of the internet lies in its remarkable effectiveness, efficiency, high accessibility, practicality, and provision of virtually unlimited information resources. It has streamlined processes, saving time and resources by eliminating the need for physical presence. The internet offers unmatched convenience, seamlessly integrating into our daily lives. Moreover, it empowers individuals with abundant knowledge across diverse domains, fostering intellectual growth globally and transcending barriers of location, language, and socioeconomic status.

It is conformable with the informants' statement that digital platforms give a lot of opportunities and chances to access information. 6 out of 6 informants agreed with the main idea that using digital platforms will make it easier to find out idols' latest updates and many more insights about the fandom. One of the informants clearly stated that engaging in digital activity on digital platforms makes it easier to get to know idols' daily activities even though they are separated by overseas countries. "It is really helpful to get idols' latest information, how they are doing or any life updates." (Feby, January 30th 2024). In today's world of instant information sharing online, digital platforms have become extremely valuable tools for fans who want to stay up-to-date on news about their idols. These platforms bring together all the official updates,

announcements, fan discussions, and analyses in one convenient place. The informants highlighted how helpful it is to have so much information readily available at their fingertips. Additionally, the interactive nature of digital platforms allows fans to engage with one another, have real-time conversations, share perspectives, and collectively analyze every aspect of their idol's career and personal life. This level of fan interaction and community was very difficult in the past. The informants expressed how much they appreciate being able to connect with other fans from around the world.

Another informant also told the researcher that one of them once subscribed to a paid platform for interaction with the NCT group, namely Bubble. A platform that allows fans to interact with the idol in the form of a texting display where fans can directly send the message to the idol. To access this platform, a fan has to pay about Rp60.000 per month and repay to always get an active account. "Once, I subscribed to the Bubble platform but had to unsubscribe because, for me, the price of Rp60.000 per month is not suitable for college students" (Nadin, January 29th 2024). The high price to subscribe to the platform is kinda unworthy for college students who don't have a permanent job.

It's clear that digital platforms have dramatically improved the fan experience by providing easy access to information and ways to connect that were unimaginable before. The fact that all six informants agreed emphasizes just how impactful and valuable these online platforms have become for fans to stay plugged into the latest updates about their favorite idols and fandoms.

The examples were found on informants that:

- a. Using digital platforms can give them the latest updates of the idols
 - b. Using digital platforms can make them feel close with the idols
 - c. Informants feel comfortable using digital tools in daily life
 - d. Informants also can access the official website of agency that contains related idol
2. Utilization of technology to support work

The fast progress in technology has brought an age of great convenience, impacting many areas of our lives, including work. By utilizing current technological devices and systems, people can now make every task more efficient, faster, and smoother. Many operations that used to require a lot of effort and time can now be done easily with the

help of technology in a very practical and user-friendly way. Additionally, the amazing improvements in information technology have opened up new opportunities for people to earn extra income. The rise of internet platforms and online activities has allowed enterprising individuals to make money from their skills, talents, and creativity. In simple terms, technology has made life much more convenient, allowing people to work smarter rather than harder. Difficult tasks are now easier by using technological tools. The internet has also created new money-making possibilities for those who are looking to monetize their abilities online. Rapid tech advancements have streamlined work while creating novel income avenues.

This is in line with a statement from the informant, who stated that being a fandom in the digital era can make them creative, for example, creating an alternative universe. The alternative universe is a fan-fiction story created by a fan who uses their idols as the main character in the storyline. “Another characteristic of fandom is creativity because in today’s era, there are a lot of alternative universes, which is a fan-fiction story created by the fans.” (Dewi, February 1st 2024). In the vast digital landscape, fandoms have found a vibrant space to express their imaginative visions and shared passions. The creation of alternative universes represents a unique intersection of creativity and fandom, where fans can weave intricate narratives that transport their idols into entirely new realms and situations. This form of storytelling allows fans to explore different genres, themes, and character dynamics, all while paying homage to the idols that inspire them. What makes alternative universes particularly intriguing is their ability to transcend the boundaries of the idols’ public personas and established narratives. Fans can reimagine their idols as protagonists in fantastical worlds, historical settings, or even mundane everyday scenarios, all while imbuing them with distinct personalities and character arcs. This creative exercise not only fosters a deeper connection between fans and their idols but also serves as a testament to the boundless imagination and dedication of the fandom community. Moreover, the digital realm has facilitated the sharing and collaboration of these alternative universe stories, fostering a sense of community and collective storytelling. Fans can engage with one another, offering feedback, exchanging ideas, and even collaborating on expansive shared

universe narratives. This interactive aspect further enriches the creative experience, allowing fans to inspire and be inspired by one another's imaginative efforts.

The informant's statement highlights the transformative power of the digital age, where fandoms can transcend the role of passive consumers and emerge as active creators, weaving intricate tales that celebrate their idols while simultaneously showcasing their own artistic talents and storytelling prowess.

The examples were found on informants that:

- a. Informants can use digital tools to stay productive
 - b. Informants can pour the creativity on digital platforms to create fan-fiction story
3. Facilitate the communication process

Information technology has truly changed how people communicate with each other. In today's digital world, it has become much easier to communicate with others thanks to the many advanced communication features and platforms available. There are lots of new tools that help make sharing information and interacting with individuals more seamless and efficient. This technology revolution has brought many innovative solutions that make modern communication better. From apps that allow for instant messaging to video calling or voice note platforms that make it feel like you're in the same room, the digital world now provides user-friendly options for people to connect, share, and work together regardless of distance. These enhanced features don't just speed up information exchange but also improve the overall experience, allowing for more meaningful interactions and strengthening connections across far distances.

This is proved by the informants' statement, which stated that technology's development in today's era had grown so much more than before. Many new features facilitate fans to do the fandom's digital activities, such as a new feature on Twitter, namely Space. Space is a feature that allows users to create virtual rooms for discussion or entertainment purposes. Space is similar to Instagram's live feature, but it is more like a voice note feature that can only provide audio in real time. In the virtual forum of space, everyone who joined can be a speaker or just can be a listener. "Twitter has one feature called Space, a feature where we interact similarly to a voice note. So, we interact without seeing physical appearance, only the sound." (Dewi, February 1st 2024).

Within these virtual Space forums, participants are granted the flexibility to assume different roles based on their preferences and desired level of involvement. Some users can opt to be active speakers, utilizing their microphones to contribute their voices, opinions, insights, and perspectives to the ongoing discussion or event. These speakers can engage in real-time dialogues, pose questions, share their thoughts, and actively participate in the audio-based interactions, fostering a dynamic and engaging atmosphere. Conversely, other users may choose to join as listeners, allowing them to follow along with the audio conversation without the need to actively contribute their voices. These listeners can tune in, absorb the discussions, and gain insights or entertainment without the pressure of actively speaking. This flexibility accommodates diverse preferences and comfort levels, creating an inclusive environment where fans can engage with their fandoms in a manner that suits their individual needs and preferences. The Space feature on Twitter has emerged as a dynamic and immersive platform that transcends geographical boundaries, fostering a sense of community and enabling fans to connect, converse, and participate in their fandoms through audio-based real-time interactions. It facilitates dynamic discussions, events, or entertainment experiences within the digital realm, allowing fans to dig deeper into their shared interests and passions, fostering a vibrant and engaging virtual space dedicated to their fandoms.

In essence, the advent of Twitter's Space feature exemplifies the profound impact of technological advancements on enhancing and enriching the digital experiences of fans within their respective fandoms. It has opened up new avenues for real-time audio-based interactions, fostering a sense of community, facilitating dynamic discussions, and providing a platform for fans to engage with their passions in an immersive and inclusive virtual environment.

The examples were found on informants that:

- a. Informants can interact with idols directly using paid digital platforms such as Bubble
- b. Informants can interact with fellow fans and became a virtual friend
- c. Informants can get concert information directly from the agency

- d. It facilitates fan to have a forum for Safa Space to say apologize even though it turns out to be a negative impact
 - e. The negative impact can causing a cyberbullying to another fan in digital war
4. Ease of transaction

Another benefit of using digital platforms is the ease of virtual transactions. Information technology has made things a lot more convenient for us, not just for communicating. One of the great benefits of these digital advancements is how much easier it has become to complete transactions of all kinds in many different areas and industries. People no longer have to meet in person to handle transactions. Nowadays, in the digital world, people can do all sorts of transactions online, which is much more practical and efficient than traditional methods. Technology now plays an important role in allowing us to complete various online transactions with ease, such as transferring money, buying goods or services, and so on. Going digital has made things simpler, getting rid of many location-based issues and letting people and companies complete transactions quickly and conveniently without having to be in the same spot.

It is suited well with the informants' statement that in fandom, there is also an activity of sell-buy transaction of idol's merchandise. The digital platform really helps the fans gain money by selling unique stuff to the whole fandom. "I often sell idols' photocard of a few K-Pop groups in the digital platforms." (Rani, March 7th 2024). One popular category of merchandise that is actively traded among fans includes photo cards featuring their beloved idols or celebrities. These photo cards, often included as inserts in albums or other merchandise, hold immense value and appeal for dedicated fans, who are willing to acquire rare or limited-edition variants through secondary markets facilitated in digital platforms. In addition to photo cards, fans also engage in the buying and selling of collectible figures depicting their idols. These highly detailed and meticulously crafted figures serve as cherished possessions for fans, allowing them to own tangible representations of their favorite celebrities. The digital platforms provide a marketplace for fans to purchase these figurines from fellow collectors or vendors, catering to the demand for such niche and specialized merchandise. Another informant also stated that she bought a ticket to a concert by finding it on Twitter since the ticket had been sold out on the official ticketing website. The digital realm has

played a crucial role in enabling these commercial activities within fandoms. Online marketplaces, social media platforms, and dedicated fan communities have become virtual hubs where fans can connect, advertise their merchandise, negotiate prices, and facilitate transactions. This digital ecosystem has streamlined the process of buying and selling idol merchandise, transcending geographical barriers and connecting fans from across the globe who share a passion for their idols.

In essence, the digital landscape has facilitated a thriving marketplace within fandoms, allowing fans to engage in the buying and selling of coveted merchandise, such as photo cards and figurines related to their beloved idols or celebrities. This commercial aspect of fandom not only caters to the collecting desires of fans but also provides avenues for fans to generate income by trading these highly valued items within their passionate communities.

The examples were found on informants that:

- a. Informants can buy the official merchandise from official store
- b. Informants can sell their own merchandise directly to another fan
- c. Informants can buy the concert tickets easily
- d. Informants can find a concert ticket from ‘calo’ seller when its sold out on official website

Fandom can use all of the facilities that are provided by digital platforms. The usual activities that informants do as a fandom, such as watching NCT’s content, sharing sessions with fellow fandom, streaming the music, and finding updates about NCT, and these activities make them feel happy and proud. It is also in line with the statement by Asari (2023) that stated one of the advantages of using or communicating through digital platforms is the extraordinary level of convenience and efficiency. On the other side, these behaviors can lead to fanatic behavior if a fan gets too intense in engaging on social media and becomes too overly proud. Five out of six informants agreed with the statement that a fanatic fan could appear because of the feeling of being proud of the idol and feeling superior above all, as well as in engaging the social media. However, another informant stated that fanatic behavior is not because of only the way of engaging on social media. It depends on an individual’s life if they have a real business in daily life so that they won’t

engage too much in social media and make it only as a healing or refreshing medium. “If people are so fanatic, maybe they don’t have a job in daily life. People who use social media and do not prioritize it and not too engage, for me, they won’t become fanatic.” (Nadin, January 29th 2024).

This kind of act behavior is possibly done by a solo stan who only supports one idol in a group. This is in line with the informants’ statement that fanatical behavior is a negative behavior in the fandom world. An informant even stated this behavior could lead to harmful behavior such as cyberbullying, sexual harassment, and stalking. Stalking is the behavior of getting more detailed information about something by crossing someone's privacy. “Mostly, fanatic behavior must be related with negative behavior because the overrated feeling of pride can cause extreme things such as cyberbullying, verbal or non-verbal harassment, and the most awfully is stalking.” (Feby, January 30th 2024). The informants clearly stated that fanatic behavior is bad, strange, useless, and even annoying towards others. They said that fanaticism involves an extreme, irrational devotion to something that goes too far. Fanatics become intolerant of anyone who disagrees with their beliefs or allegiances. The informants described fanatics as people who go to unacceptable lengths to force their views onto others through harassment, aggression, or other disruptive actions. The informants firmly believed that fanatical tendencies serve no good purpose and only cause negativity, division, and conflict in society. They criticized fanatics for not respecting individual differences, being unwilling to have rational conversations, and pushing away anyone who does not perfectly align with their extreme stances. Overall, the informants made it very clear that fanatic behavior is unacceptable conduct that society should frankly condemn and discourage. They expressed a definite intolerance for fanatical mindsets and actions that marginalize others.

The aspect that is also being discussed in this research is Safa Space. After conducting the interview session with the informants, it was found that all of them stated that the Safa Space case was indicated as fanatic behavior. Even though each informant had their own perspectives, but still six out of six informants agreed that Safa Space is an overrated case. The deeper analysis will be divided into a few parts below:

1. It was found in the three informants' statements that Safa Space contains people who are willing to do anything to protect the idols, and it can be said to be fanatic because they overrated the idol. The statement came from Renita, Feby, and Dewi, who strongly agree that the behavior of always wanting to do anything for the idol can be claimed as fanatic behavior. It can be interpreted that Safa Space happened because there are some fans who try to position themselves as protector of the idol.
2. Another statement from the informant said that the person who always protects their idols most likely has the intention to maintain a good reputation, but at the same, it can lead them to become addicted and forget about their daily real life. The statement came from Nadin, who have a perception that a fanatic fan actually has a positive side to maintaining the good reputation of the idol but turns out to become a negative behavior because always spending time only focusing on the idol.
3. Another informant responded and related it with the solo stan term, saying the case happened because there was a party that claimed to solo stan and mocked another idol, causing a conflict between fans. The statement came from Ariyana, who perceives a fanatic fan appears by a solo stan out there. Solo stan means obviously that the attention placed on one idol only as the favorite bias.
4. Another statement was added by the last informant, who clearly said that Safa Space is a fanatic because bad behavior is thrown at Safa, which threatens her to reveal their real social life and demotes her parents' job roles. The statement came from Rani, who revealed that she is contra with people who do those kinds of things and does not support them at all. Another statement from Rani also stated that this kind of behavior is really strange to happen. "Now when I see a fan who protects the idols just like defends a country is really strange." (Rani, March 7th 2024).

All six people interviewed agreed that the Safa Space case had been blown out of proportion, even though they each had different views on other things. The answers all pointed to the Safa Space situation as a real example of extreme fan behavior. This agreement across different points of view suggests that the case while showing true fanaticism, has gotten more attention than it should have. The fact that everyone agreed, despite their different backgrounds or opinions, makes this conclusion stronger. It seems

the Safa Space case has become a hot topic and is taking attention away from other important issues. This shared opinion from all six people interviewed gives us a clearer picture of how the case is viewed by those familiar with it.

C. Factors That Influence Perception

From the findings above, it was found few factors that influence informants' perception. The process of perceiving also influenced by 4 factors according to Wood (2016) which are:

1. Audio-Visual Message

In the theory of Wood (2016), audio-visual messages are claimed as part of the physiological aspect. In line with the interview session with informants, it was found that informants' physiology does affect the perception of being a fandom. Visual and audio-sensory aspects play an important role in perception. Informants see the idol and listen to the music of the idol's creation, becoming the first stimuli caught by informants. The visual sensory input, specifically observing and witnessing the physical appearance and presence of their idols, serves as an initial and powerful stimulus for the informants. The act of seeing their idols, whether in person or through various media channels, triggers a set of emotional and cognitive responses that contribute to the formation and reinforcement of their fandom identity. Additionally, the auditory sensory input, particularly listening to the music created and performed by their idols, holds a profound impact on the informants' perception. The melodies, lyrics, and vocal performances resonate with them on a deeper level, evoking a range of emotions and fostering a sense of connection with the artists they admire.

These sensory stimuli, both visual and auditory, act as catalysts for the informants' involvement in the fandom. The act of seeing their idols and listening to their music becomes the initial point of entry, triggering a cascade of psychological and emotional responses that shape their overall experience as fans. It is important to note that these sensory modalities do not operate in isolation; rather, they intertwine and reinforce each other, creating a multisensory experience that heightens the informants' engagement and dedication to the fandom. The visual and auditory stimuli work in tandem, amplifying the emotional resonance and fostering a deeper connection with

the idols and the broader fandom community. Furthermore, the role of these sensory modalities extends beyond the initial stages of fandom formation. They continue to play a pivotal role in sustaining and enriching the informants' involvement over time, serving as constant reminders and reinforcements of their affiliation and allegiance to the fandom.

The example were found on informants that:

- a. YouTube as visual content is more attractive rather than the textual content
- b. Informants average time in consuming NCT's content around 2-3 hours/day
- c. Informants love to watch concert
- d. Informants followed all of NCT's social media accounts

2. Personal and Fandom Background

Relating to the theory of Wood (2016), the personal and fandom background was indicated as Culture. The life background and location where informants live can affect how they perceive. One of the informants provided an interesting illustration of how her life background and the evolution of digital platforms have influenced her perception of being a part of the fandom. She clearly stated that her journey as a fan began a long time ago, during an era when Facebook was the primary platform available for online engagement. This early exposure to fandom through the lens of a single platform shaped her initial understanding and expectations. As new digital platforms emerged and gained popularity over time, the informant found herself navigating a rapidly evolving landscape of fandom engagement. With each new platform, she encountered varying features, functionalities, and community dynamics. This exposure allowed her to develop a nuanced perspective, enabling her to compare and contrast the benefits and limitations of each platform in relation to her fandom experiences. The informant's ability to draw upon her long-standing involvement and witness the transformative power of technology provided her with a unique vantage point. She could reflect on the ways in which her perception of being a fan has evolved, adapting to the changing digital landscape while maintaining a core connection to the fandom itself.

Moreover, the informant's life background, which includes her personal experiences and cultural influences, likely played a significant role in shaping her

perception and engagement with the fandom. These contextual factors may have influenced her approach to online communities, her preferences for certain platforms, and her understanding of the fandom's cultural nuances. It is important to note that the impact of life background and location is not limited to this specific informant. Each individual within the fandom brings their unique personal history and contextual influences, which shape their perceptions and experiences in different ways. These factors contribute to the richness of perspectives and interpretations that exist within the fandom community. By acknowledging and understanding the role of life background and location, the researcher can gain valuable insights into the diverse experiences and perceptions within fandoms. It highlights the importance of considering these contextual factors when studying fan cultures and their interactions with digital platforms, as they can significantly influence how individuals perceive and engage with the fandom.

The examples were found on informants that:

- a. Informants used various digital platforms that have different functions
 - b. One informant started the fandom life from Facebook then transformed into digital platforms in today's era such as Twitter and Instagram
 - a. Not all informants are pure NCT fans, some of them also started being a fan of another artist
 - b. Informants live in different areas which each of the areas has own cultures
3. Social Roles

All of the informants in this research have a social role as college students. It affects their perception since they are students and need some entertainment to refresh themselves when they feel tired from studying. An informant also stated that being a fan also provides entertainment during the COVID-19 pandemic era and washes away the boring times by watching idols' content. The life of a college student is often characterized by a rigorous schedule, intense study sessions, and constant pressure to meet academic expectations. This demanding environment can lead to mental and emotional exhaustion, making it crucial for students to find healthy outlets for relaxation and rejuvenation. One of the informants articulated this sentiment, emphasizing how being a part of the fandom serves as a source of entertainment and

respite from the taxing nature of their studies. The act of engaging with the fandom's content, whether through music, videos, or other forms of media, provides them with a temporary escape from the academic grind, allowing them to recharge and regain their mental and emotional equality. Furthermore, the informant highlighted the significant role the fandom played during the COVID-19 pandemic era, a period characterized by unprecedented challenges and disruptions to daily life. During this time of isolation and uncertainty, the fandom became a sanctuary, offering a sense of connection and solace through the shared experience of enjoying their idol's content.

By immersing themselves in the world of their favorite artists, the informants found a much-needed distraction from the monotony and boredom that often accompanied the pandemic-imposed restrictions. The act of watching their idol's performances, engaging with the fandom community online, or simply losing themselves in the music provided a joyful feeling. It is important to recognize that the relationship between college students and fandoms is not a one-dimensional phenomenon. While the fandom undoubtedly serves as a source of entertainment and respite, it also has the potential to foster a sense of community, facilitate personal growth, and nurture creative expression among its members. By acknowledging the nuanced interplay between the informants' social roles, personal circumstances, and their engagement with the fandom, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of fan cultures and their significance in the lives of individuals.

The examples were found on informants that:

- a. One of informants being a fan since 2016 means from a high school students era until become a college student
 - b. Still a teenager that still live with parents
4. Cognitive Abilities

The life background affects how people think. It was found that the information from informants being a fandom because of the own desire to become a fan of the idol group NCT. One of the key factors that contributed to this decision was the informants' perception of NCT as positive role models. The informants found themselves drawn to the group's ability to radiate positivity and uplift their spirits. NCT's music, performances, and overall persona resonated with the informants on a deeper level,

providing them with a source of inspiration and energy. This connection can be traced back to the informants' life backgrounds and the unique experiences that have shaped their values and perspectives. Their personal journeys, the challenges they have faced, and the lessons they have learned along the way have contributed to their appreciation for positivity and their search for role models who embody these qualities. Furthermore, the informants' life backgrounds likely influenced their perception of what constitutes a good role model. Their cultural upbringing, family values, and societal norms may have played a role in shaping their understanding of the characteristics they deem admirable and worthy of emulation.

It is important to note that the impact of life background on perception is not a one-size-fits-all phenomenon. Each individual's experiences are unique, and their interpretations of the same stimuli may vary. However, by acknowledging the influence of life background, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the motivations and thought processes that drive individuals to become part of fandoms. In the case of the informants' connection with NCT, their life backgrounds served as a lens through which they perceived the group's positive energy and role model qualities. This personal resonance ultimately influenced their desire to become part of the fandom, seeking inspiration, solace, and a sense of belonging in the shared admiration for NCT. By exploring the relationship between life background and perception, the researcher can uncover valuable insights into the complexities of fan culture and the diverse motivations that drive individuals to engage with and support their idols.

The examples were found on informants that:

- a. Informants feel happy when idolizing NCT
- b. Informants make NCT as an inspirational role model
- c. Informants loving every masterpiece that NCT has made
- d. One informant thinks that as a fan who is still in teenager phase not mandatory to have paid content or merchandise of the idol

D. Comparison with International Research

A study from Japan entitled "The Relationship between Fandom and Well-Being" looked at the connection between being a passionate fan of something and personal well-

being. Being a fan means excitedly supporting and engaging with something you love, whether it's a celebrity, fictional character, or brand. Previous research has shown that when customers are highly involved and engaged with a brand, it can improve their overall well-being and sense of thriving. This study provides quantitative data supporting this by surveying people actively participating in different fandoms. Even with the COVID-19 pandemic's restrictions on events, fans found ways to continue supporting their beloved interests, gaining a sense of fulfillment and happiness from these activities. In the long run, this devoted fan engagement likely contributed to improving the fans' overall well-being. The study presents fandom as a way for supporters and recipients (fans and their favorites) to mutually create value for each other, similar to how customers and brands can have a beneficial engaged relationship where higher engagement leads to greater well-being. The comparison with the researcher's research discusses fandom and the digital activities that can have various impacts on a fan.

In addition, a research conducted in the Philippines entitled "Influence of Digital Media Advertisements of KPOP Industry on Selected Young Adults in Manila, Philippines", stated that this study investigated the factors influencing Filipino young adults (ages 15-30 in Metro Manila) preferences for local advertisements featuring K-pop elements. Online survey data revealed respondents actively engaged with K-pop through purchasing music, streaming content, following news or updates, and collecting merchandise. The avid fandom was driven by uses and gratifications, wherein the content satisfied desired qualities. Respondents obtained K-pop information from dedicated websites and social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, which also facilitated interactions between fans and artists, though direct personal engagement was unlikely to avoid incidents. The researchers concluded that K-pop culture significantly impacts local advertisements, evidenced by its rising popularity and deployment across digital media to attract the target market demographic. Heightened fan engagement correlates with greater resonance and appeal for advertising leveraging K-pop influences. The comparison with the researcher's research discusses the effect of digital content on fandom fanatic behavior in today's era.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In this chapter of research, researcher will conclude the research and outline its limitations regarding the perception of digital activities within NCT fans that affect fanatic behavior. In addition, the researcher will provide recommendations intended to be useful and serve as a reference for the future research.

A. Summary

Based on the findings and discussion above, it can be concluded that informants perceive being a fandom as entertainment and also as social interaction. The perceptions of digital activities also examined in this research including the easy access of digital platforms which helps informants to stay updated with the idols' latest information, utilization of technology which provides a platform to share a creativity of each person, facilitating the communication process that can be a positive either the negative way, and the ease of transaction that helps transaction process of idols' merchandise or any other stuff.

Factors influencing informants' perceptions including the audio-viusal message provided by the idols such as the music and any other content on all digital platforms, their personal background and story where informants live and grow up. The environment and people around informants also affect how they perceive being a fandom, whether it is fun or boring, but it turns out informants enjoy being a fandom. Each informant's perspective affects their enjoyment of fandom, which can enhance their mood through engagement with idols or related content. Next factor is the social roles which most informants, as college students, view fandom differently compared to their teenage years. As well as the cognitive abilities of each person that influence by the way each person thinks of something.

Informants claimed the digital platforms as valuable tools for engaging in various fandom activities. Fans can explore numerous features on digital platforms, which allow them to be creative and express their ideas productively. On the other some fans focus on negative aspects and attempt to turn them into positive actions. Fans who engage in social media just to hype idols and does not have exact activities can turn into a fanatic fan. A

Fanatic is a negative phenomenon in a fandom's world that can cause an annoying situation for other fans. Informants found fanatic phenomena as problematic and unproductive.

The impact of fanatic behavior can lead into extreme act such as the bullying, harassment and stalking the idols which possible to happen in the world of fandom. Informants considered digital activity in Safa Space nonsensical and should not happen again in the future. Informants hope that in the future, people in fandom can be more peaceful and more aware of little things that are written on social media that can be harmful to other people. Digital footprints can be highly impactful, and thus individuals must be more cautious.

B. Research Limitation

1. The research only included informants from the NCT fandom, resulting in data exclusively based on this group's experiences.

C. Recommendation

Based on the limitations identified, the researcher offers the following recommendations for future researchers who wish to undertake similar studies:

1. Future researcher who wish to conduct similar studies should interview not only local fans of idol group, but also with international fans to gain broader data.
2. Future researcher can also elaborate further on digital activities.

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APPENDICE

TABLES ATTACHMENT

Table of Google Forms Questions

No.	Informants General Information Through Google Form Questions
1	Nama Lengkap Informan
2	Umur Informan
3	Gender Informan
4	Asal
5	Domisili
6	Agama
7	Status Pekerjaan
8	Instansi
9	Skala Penghasilan (Perbulan)
10	Hobi
11	Sejak kapan anda menjadi penggemar NCT?
12	Darimana anda mengenali NCT saat pertama kali?
13	Apakah anda mengikuti akun sosial media NCT, terutama Twitter?
14	Berapa lama durasi anda menghabiskan waktu untuk melihat konten NCT dalam sehari?
15	Sebagai penggemar, anda lebih menyukai konten digital berupa visual atau textual? Dan mengapa?
16	Harapan apa yang anda ingin capai sebagai seorang penggemar?

Table of Interview Questions

PERCEPTION OF DIGITAL ACTIVITY BETWEEN FANDOM THAT AFFECT FANATIC BEHAVIOR		
Konteks	Fandom	Bagaimana pendapat pribadi anda menjadi seorang fandom?
		Faktor yang mempengaruhi anda sebagai fandom dalam berpendapat di sosial media?
		Sifat apa saja yang biasanya ada pada fandom?
	Platform	Platform apa yang menjadi preferensi anda dalam melakukan digital activity sebagai fandom?
		Platform apa yang anda rasa lebih mudah di akses?
		Platform apa yang anda rasa lebih nyaman?
	Digital Activity	Apa yang kamu ketahui tentang digital activity?
		Jenis digital activity apa saja yang kamu ketahui?
		Apakah kamu merasa melakukan digital activity?
		Bagaimana kamu melakukan digital activity tersebut?
		Tanggapan anda terkait digital activity tentang fandom?
		Menurut anda, perkembangan sosial media seperti apa sehingga membuat berbagai digital activity?
		Selama anda bersosial media, digital activity apa yang terjadi dan pernah anda alami sebagai fandom?
		Mengapa pada akhirnya anda ingin melakukan digital activity tersebut?
	Fanatic Behavior	Bagaimana pendapat anda tentang perilaku fanatik?
		Apa faktor seorang fandom dapat mengidolakan suatu idola sebegitu kerasnya?
	Case Study	Apa yang kamu ketahui tentang kasus Safa Space?
		Bagaimana tanggapanmu terkait kasus tersebut?
		Apakah menurut kamu digital activity yang terjadi pada kasus tersebut menjadi bentuk fanatik?