



저작자표시-비영리-변경금지 2.0 대한민국

이용자는 아래의 조건을 따르는 경우에 한하여 자유롭게

- 이 저작물을 복제, 배포, 전송, 전시, 공연 및 방송할 수 있습니다.

다음과 같은 조건을 따라야 합니다:



저작자표시. 귀하는 원저작자를 표시하여야 합니다.



비영리. 귀하는 이 저작물을 영리 목적으로 이용할 수 없습니다.



변경금지. 귀하는 이 저작물을 개작, 변형 또는 가공할 수 없습니다.

- 귀하는, 이 저작물의 재이용이나 배포의 경우, 이 저작물에 적용된 이용허락조건을 명확하게 나타내어야 합니다.
- 저작권자로부터 별도의 허가를 받으면 이러한 조건들은 적용되지 않습니다.

저작권법에 따른 이용자의 권리는 위의 내용에 의하여 영향을 받지 않습니다.

이것은 [이용허락규약\(Legal Code\)](#)을 이해하기 쉽게 요약한 것입니다.

[Disclaimer](#)

국제학석사학위논문

**The Community They Build and Live in:
Emergence of Transnational Solidarity of Women
through K-Pop Fandom Focused on K-Pop
Idol/Singer/Actor Kim Jaejoong Fandom**

그들이 만들어 살아가는 공동체:
케이팝 팬덤을 통한 초국적 여성연대의 출현
가수 겸 배우 김재중 팬덤을 중심으로

2017년 2월

서울대학교 국제대학원

국제학과 한국학전공

지 정 민

**The Community They Build and Live in:
Emergence of Transnational Solidarity of Women through
K-Pop Fandom Focused on K-Pop Idol/Singer/Actor Kim
Jaejoong Fandom**

A thesis presented

by

Chi, Jungmin

to

Graduate Program in International Studies

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master

In the subject of Korean Studies

Graduate School of International Studies

Seoul National University

Seoul, Korea

February 2017

**The Community They Build and Live in:
Emergence of Transnational Solidarity of Women through K-Pop Fandom
Focused on K-Pop Idol/Singer/Actor Kim Jaejoong Fandom**

Ki-Soo Eun

Submitting a master's thesis of Korean Studies

February 2016

Graduate School of Seoul National University

Graduate School of International Studies

Korean Studies

Confirming the master's thesis written by Jungmin Chi

February 2016

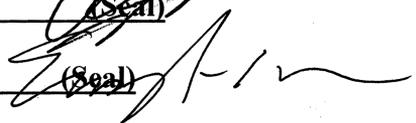
Chair Han, Young-Hae


(Seal)

Vice Chair Park, Tae-Gyun


(Seal)

Examiner Eun, Ki-Soo


(Seal)

© Copyrights by Jungmin Chi 2017

All rights Reseerved

ABSTRACT

The Community They Build and Live in: Emergence of Transnational Solidarity of Women through K-Pop Fandom Focused on K-Pop Idol/Singer/Actor Kim Jaejoong Fandom

Jungmin Chi

Graduate School of International Studies

Korean Studies

Seoul National University

This research is an attempt to examine a global K-pop idol fandom pertaining to its function as a vehicle in the emergence of transnational solidarity and empowerment of women. The fandom of a Korean idol star, singer and actor Kim Jaejoong, shares many common attributes with other communities of audience and/or communities of interest. However, global Kim Jaejoong fandom possesses distinguishing characteristics that make it a community beyond a usual community of audience or interest. It is closer to a “real” life grassroots community happening in both virtual and real spaces that transforms attitudes, values and behaviors of the members that motivates them to

engage in collective action to change the system they are confined to. Serving dual function as an observer and a participant, I adopted qualitative analysis method to examine the characteristics of the fandom from a feminist ethnography/auto-ethnography approach, utilizing the psychological empowerment, sense of community and gift economy frame works to explore the nature and characteristics of this fandom. This fandom consists of women of all color, age and religion. The findings of this study illustrates these mostly single, professional women whose first language is usually neither Korean nor English gather in the name of their star to form, maintain and expand a transnational sisterhood to find meaning in life, encourage and comfort each other, and grow together.

Key words: Fandom, Empowerment, Solidarity, KimJaejoong, K-pop, Hallyu

Student ID: 2014-25045

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract in English-----	1
Table of Contents -----	3
I. Introduction-----	5
II. Literature Review and Significance of Research-----	13
1. Fandom Is a Community -----	13
2. Space for Solidarity and Empowerment-----	17
3. Economy of Fandom-----	20
4. Why Study Kim Jaejoong Fandom?-----	23
III. Methodology and Research Design -----	30
1. Qualitative Research-----	30
2. Twitter Analysis-----	32
3. Open End Survey -----	38
4. In Depth Group Interviews -----	41
5. In Depth Individual Interviews-----	42
IV. Results-----	44
1. Yes, I Am a <i>Ppasuni</i> -----	44
2. Community of Their Own-----	50
2-1. Not One of Those Screaming Girls -----	50
2-2. Sense of Community and Empowerment-----	58
2-2-1. Official Fan Club VS Grassroots Fan Community ----	58

2-2-2. Psychological Community that Empowers Women ---	61
2-2-3. Gift Economy at Work -----	77
V. Conclusion-----	84
Reference -----	87
Glossary-----	95
Appendix-----	99
Abstract in Korean-----	103

I. Introduction

Fandom has become conspicuous and ubiquitous modern feature around the globe in recent years, thanks to the proliferation of mass media via inter-net and its connectivity. In fact, almost everyone can be labeled a fan, though in varying degrees, of something or someone: whether of a hobby, a sports team, a TV series or a musician. Fandom is not only a mere collection of individual fans but it encompasses the fan culture and practices specific to each fandom fans build; Fandom is even considered the most common mode of life in modern society by some scholars (Gray, Sandvoss, Harrington, 2007). Nevertheless, if you attend an opera or classic music concert, most likely, people consider you a cultured lady. But if you are a career woman in your late thirties and reveal the fact that you are a fan of a K-pop¹ idol group member, especially in Korea, a puzzled look can be one of the politest responses you will ever get.

The deep chasm differentiating the K-pop fans and the patrons of high culture persists in this high-tech driven, hyper-globalizing world, despite almost three-decade long fan study tradition's attempts to

¹ K-pop is a term, many believe, first used by Japanese, and later by audience outside of Korea to refer to Korean popular music style began spreading widely in Asia in the late 90s. J, which represented Japanese in J-pop that meant Japanese popular music, with K to represent Korea. This term will be used in this sense in this paper.

defend the pop culture fandom. You are still judged not by your profession, work ethic or character, but by what and who you like “a lot.” Or maybe by who you are: by your gender and age. Identical stigma related to Korean idol star fandoms can be observed not only in Asia but also in countries in Latin America and countries of former Soviet Bloc, where Korean Wave (한류, *Hallyu* from here and after)² is believed to be widely and positively accepted according to Korean media and government reports.

The surge of *Hallyu* in recent years prompted interests in Korean dramas, K-Pop and their respective fandoms and their broader implications on the social fabric inside and outside of Korea among both academics and none academics. Rich array of scholarly works and books for general audiences on K-pop and *Hallyu* is flourishing as of late. Scholars like John Lie emphasize the economic motivation behind the K-pop. Lie explains that South Korean culture, including K-pop, “is consumer culture, experienced in the perpetual present tense” (2013: 88). There isn’t much Korean in traditional sense or original about K-pop; it is rather a cultural product formulated to cater to the global taste, engineered just like other consumer goods such as cellphones made in

² Korean Wave or *Hallyu* (한류) is a term coined in China after the Korean drama syndrome hit Asia by storm in the 90s. Now, it encompasses K-pop, Korean made products and all types of Korean cultural products such as food, fashion and life style.

Korea by yet another Korea's export oriented industry called K-pop. K-pop industry borrowed heavily from trendy musical styles of the West and J-pop, and expertly repackaged them with a few innovative elements for export. These works tend to deemphasize the powerful participatory role played by the fans and the communities they build or how the fan life transforms the individuals in the community, which in turn influence fabric of the greater Korean society and the world. In this sense, these works perceive fans and fandoms as passive receptors.

There have been many attempts by Korean scholars to analyze *Hallyu* and K-pop from multiple disciplines as well. The majority of works, however, focuses on K-pop as a cultural product and how to expand K-pop's claim as a global cultural phenomenon or as a successful business model that maximizes profit. The role of global fans and fandoms are reduced to consumers of K-pop industry. Korean idol fans are usually suspicious of nonfan fan study researchers claiming to have an 'objective' stance, and reluctant to reveal how they really feel or exactly what they do. Fans are keenly aware of the persistent prejudice and stigma attached to K-pop fans, constantly perpetuated by the mainstream media and the academia. Even *acafans*³ have difficulties approaching fans and obtaining comprehensive information about

³ An *acafan* is a contraction of two word, academic and fan, referring to an academic who identifies herself or himself as a fan writing about her or his fan subject.

fandoms (Lee S., 2013). Consequently, the researchers end up only scratching the surface of the fandom.

The fans' suspicions are not totally unfounded. Intentionally or unintentionally, most of scholarly works related to K-pop has been catering to Korean entertainment industry out to maximize their profit and Korean government interested in improving Korea's national brand image. Korean media repeatedly uses the images of mob of irrational, screaming teenage girls as the default for both domestic and international K-pop idol fans. It is ironical that Koreans in general are so proud of *Hallyu* spreading all over the world, and the K-pop industry does not hesitate to reap the fruit of K-pop's international success. They are so quick to claim the credit to their superior marketing strategies, while they seldom give proper credit to the role Korean and international K-pop fans played in that success. To them, fans are still ignorant, gullible fangirls. Koreans commonly refer fans as *ppa-su-ni* (빠순이)⁴, which is literally a contraction of two words, older brother (오빠, *oppa*) and little girl (순이, *sunni*), reflective of the implied gender and age specific derogatory nuance. Kang Joon-man advocates correctly

⁴ Ki-ran Kim and Ki-ho Choi defined it as “contraction of *oppa* and *sunni* meaning, a little girl who is deeply into an older man. A derogatory term used to refer to avid fans of celebrities or professional athletes. As suggested in suffix ‘~*sunni*’ this term is targeted to describe a group of teenage girls in particular. Average age of *ppasunni* became younger in general compared to their predecessors, and their behavior tends to be more active and blind toward the subject of their adoration.”

in his recent book that the issue of fandom in Korea is a matter of ‘gender’ and ‘age’ and further suggests that it may be related to Korea’s widespread, long culture of misogyny, surfacing as one of the most controversial social conflicts in recent years (2016).

Lately, Korean scholars from multiple disciplines have started to recognize the K-pop Korean fans and fandoms as important agents that drive Korea’s cultural and social changes and as a distinctively contemporary social phenomenon. It is even more encouraging sign that self-proclaimed *acafans* began to emerge in Korean academia, and research papers examining the characteristics and evolution of Korean idol fandoms and their impact on Korean society began surfacing, mostly in forms of master’s thesis. This can be possibly credited to the coming of age of many fans of second generation K-pop idol groups⁵ (Jung and Lee, 2009) and entering the academia. According to a 2015 assessment, however, only 50 papers related to *Hallyu* fandoms have been published in Korean academic journals (Kim S. and Kim S., 2015)

⁵ There seems to be a general consensus among Korean scholars of fan study, the fans and the entertainment industry about labeling the idol groups debuted in the late ‘90s and early 2000s such as G.O.D. and H.O.T. the first generation K-pop idol groups. Aided by the YouTube’s revolution of mass media in 2006 and *Hallyu* Globalization Project spearheaded by the Korean government in the mid 2000s, the second generation K-pop groups appealed to more global audiences, and recognized as the K-pop groups internationally. TVXQ!, Big Bang, SNSD (Girl’s Generation), Super Junior, and 2PM are all classified into this category. Newer K-pop groups such as EXO and BTS belong to the third generation K-pop groups.

since the first such study on *Seo Taiji and Boys*⁶ fandom appeared (Kim H., 1998). Geographically, the articles are practically limited to Korea and East Asia (Yasumoto 2014, Yoon 2012). Less than five are on global fandoms, and none was written from an insider's perspective, when myriad *acafans* write about their fandom in the academic trend outside of Korea.

My unique role as an exclusive Korean/English and English/Korean translator for Kim Jaejoong fandom places me in a position to best tell the inside story of a transnational K-pop fandom. I conducted an open-end question survey of 178 international fans from 35 countries of K-pop idol, solo artist and actor Kim Jaejoong. Kim Jaejoong is a former member of group *Dongbangshinki* (동방신기, 東方神起 or TVXQ!)⁷ and a member of another group JYJ, which he formed with two other ex-members of TVXQ! in 2010 after his former group's split. He served his active military duty in Korean Army from March 31, 2015 and was discharged on December 30, 2016. I also conducted in-depth group interviews and individual interviews to

⁶ *Seo Taiji and Boys* is regarded as the first contemporary boy group emerged in Korea to command sizable fandom in Korea with shocking performance, unique musical style and lyrics that represented the young generation at the time. They were active between 1992 and 1996. Seo Taiji went on to become a solo artist afterwards.

⁷ *Dongbangshinki* debuted as a five member (Hero Jaejoong, Mickey Yuchun, Xiah Junsu, Youknow Yunho, and Max Changmin) K-pop boyband also known as TVXQ! or 東方神起, internationally.

examine how the fans define their fandom and their place in the fandom, their relationship and interactions with other fans, and what impact their fan life have on them in more detail.

My intention is to utilize qualitative research method to explore and examine the characteristics of the fandom from a feminist ethnography/auto-ethnography approach since global Kim Jaejoong fandom is predominantly female, and I am a part of this fandom. Feminist media critics and cultural theorists insist that the relationship between audiences and pop culture figures cannot be reduced to a singular, unified theory. The examinations of fandom must investigate the different ways fans construct the meanings of their involvement themselves from multiple theoretical frame works and perspectives (Bacon-Smith, 1992). For more comprehensive analysis, theoretical tools from diverse disciplines have been adopted: the community psychology frame works of the theory of psychological sense of community (PSOC), and the psychological empowerment and the anthropology frame work of the theory of gift economy will be utilized to add depth to the analysis. The results show that this fandom fits snugly into the classic definition of community of interest with psychological sense of community and a community of active participatory audience in general. Also, the concept of gift economy that operates outside the conventional capitalist monetary system can be

easily applied to explain many of the fan activities and projects. Fandom provides overwhelmingly positive contribution to personal well-being and group pleasure (Bury, 2005). It is a dynamic, multi-faceted, multi-generational, multinational community of women where solidarity and empowerment happen; a safe haven where women of all color, age and religion gather in the name of their star to form a transnational sisterhood to find meaning in life, encourage and comfort each other, and grow together. These fans have real lives, and fandom has become very much integral to their real lives (Meyer and Tucker, 2007). In addition, this dynamic community is evolving even as I am writing this thesis, at the speed of technological revolution.

In this study casual K-pop fans or light Kim Jaejoong fans who simply enjoy his music had been excluded; only the self-professed avid fan of Kim Jaejoong, personally vested and actively involved in Kim Jaejoong fandom had been invited to join as the survey and interview participants. The term fandom possesses multiple layers of definition in this research. It refers to collection of individuals who identify themselves as Kim Jaejoong fan, their unique cultural practices and the space where the fan experiences happen.

II. Literature Review and Significance of Research

1. Fandom Is a Community

Initial researches on fans and fandoms perceived them as pathology. Fan pathology had been modeled in two contrasting categories: disease of isolation or disease of contagion. They are either obsessed, alienated individuals, who have entered into an intense fantasy relationship with a celebrity figure under the influence of the media or frenzied, hysterical teenage girl fans of popular music who are irrational, out of control and prey to number of external forces (Jenson 1992). These fans, labeled as deviant, disreputable and dangerous 'others' were easily categorized as 'them' and distinguished from 'us', the academics and also from the more reputable aficionados or collectors, who are the patrons of 'high' culture (Levine 1988).

Many scholars found faults in this fan pathology model. Jensen argues that the underlying difference is a matter of cultural hierarchy, class and status (1992). Beginning in the 1980s many scholars took a different turn; fan scholarship was no longer restricted to the deviant practices of socially maladjusted outsiders, but the source of excellent work on the performance of identity and the construction of community

in mainstream society. Fandom began to be conceptualized as a general, shared trait. Since MIT professor Henry Jenkins revealed his identity as *acafan*, someone who is a fan and works in academia, in his now seminal “*Textual Poachers*” (1992), fandoms are fervently studied from both the outside and within.

For newer *acafan* scholars as Busse and Sandovoss (2007), fandom is almost coterminous with community since the information technology revolutionized the connectivity of individual fans. Internet brought visibility not anonymity, it links real life friends in a virtual environment or vis-versa. Patricia Obst, Lucy Ziniewicz and Sandy G. Smith (2002) examined an international science fiction community to understand the sense of community among the fans in this community of interest, adopting psychological sense of community theory (PSOC). They argue that a fandom requires a community and participation in that community and possibly self-identification with that community. Many authors, especially of qualitative side, agree that the integrative theory of PSOC provides the best foundation to build upon for understanding of communities.

The term community has two major uses. First, territorial and geographical notion of community such as neighborhood, town and city. This sense of community implies a sense of belonging to particular area. Second notion is “relational,” concerned with “quality of character of

human relationship, without reference to location” (Gusfield 1975:16). Though these two terms are not mutually exclusive, Durkheim (1964) observed that modern society tend to develop community around interest and skills more than locality. In this study, the second notion will be mainly used but the first notion will have some part in explaining Kim Jaejoong’s global fandom since his fandom in each country has distinctive characteristics with tight online and offline core groups gathering at the local level as well.

McMillan and Chavis propose four elements or dimensions involved in construct of the definition of the sense of community theory: Membership, Influence, Integration and Fulfillment of Needs and Shared Emotional Connection (1986). In a sentence,

[...] Sense of community is a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to each other and to the group, and a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together. (McMillan 1976)

After 10 years of research in this area, McMillan (1996) revised the theory: First, he reinterpreted Membership with Spirit to emphasize friendship and belonging over boundaries; Second, Trust took the place of Influence to emphasize the development of community norms leading to

order, and the equal distribution of power that leads to authority based on principle and clear decision-making capacity; Thirdly, Trade took over Fulfillment of Needs to acknowledge the various rewards individuals obtain from belonging to communities; Lastly, Shared Emotional Connection was replaced by Art, or Collective Memories, which is described as stories of shared dramatic moments the community experiences together that represent the community's value and traditions.

The tightness of a community is measured by how strong the members of the community feel those four elements. A fandom starts from individuals finding a common subject of admiration and then finding each other to share the emotion and exchange information about the fan object. Then, they develop unique cultural practices surrounding their fan object and own rules. Some evolve into close communities.

From the psychological community theory frame work perspective, the global Kim Jaejoong fandom can be said to have developed into a powerful psychological community over the years: the fandom function as a community that provides sense of belonging and friendship, the fans exchange non-monetary rewards and services among themselves based on trust, and they build powerful bonds through their collective memories. However, this frame work can only describe the basic emotional quality of the solidarity Kim Jaejoong fans feel within the

community. It comes short of explaining the mechanism of how women from all around the world who speak different languages can come together as a community around this particular figure in the first place. The depth of intimacy and dedication fans feel toward each other or how this community experience empowers the fans and prompts them to act collectively to improve their lives cannot be fully explained either. This frame work will be used as a building block to shed light on Kim Jaejoong fandom's nature as a community and at what extent.

2. Space for Solidarity and Empowerment

Fandom is defined as the site of optimism and passion, preconditions for any struggle to change the condition of one's life: it was celebrated as a potential source of empowerment (Gary *et al.*, 2007). Feminist ethnographic audience research and cultural studies in particular emphasize the enabling potential of pop culture engagement for women and girls: it builds friendship and community, is pleasurable, and relieves pressure (Bacon-Smith 1992). Collectively, fans are in constant struggle to care about their subject of adoration, keep up the energy to survive and the passion necessary to imagine and enact their own projects and possibilities; fandom serves as a space shielded from

dominant relations of power (Grossberg 1992). This flexible, imaginative nature of fandom can end up building friendship and generate synergy among fans.

Empowerment of individuals and a group's enablement occur simultaneously. According to Lather, empowerment is defined as a process one undertakes for oneself rather than something to be done to or for someone (1991). To be empowered means to gain psychological control over oneself and, in addition, being able to extend a positive influence to others and the larger community (Rappaport 1985). Power emerges through interaction with the others and in terms of relationship. When a group comes together, it becomes energized, and organizes itself to achieve something meaningful for itself; this experience of empowerment enables the group to acquire identity and resolves them to act in light of its newfound sense of purpose (Christens, 2012).

Fans find agency in fandom. In his book *Virus of the Mind: The New Science of the Meme*, Richard Brodie defines self-empowerment as reinforcement of individual's independence (2000). The *acafans* of the West advocate that women involved in the fan community, mainly of TV series fans in their case, solidify their identity through discussions among themselves either online or face-to-face (Meyer and Tucker 2007). Fans are active rather than passive multifaceted followers; they are aggressive investigators and critical commentators rather than docile

receptors. These individuals come together to form a community of their own. They are much more than a collection of delusional individuals.

Fandom had been also credited for representing ways of coping with mundane, often repressive material living conditions, and providing means of dreaming or hoping for idealized futures for women (Aden 1999). It is a place shielded from the dominant power system where fans can truly be themselves.

Fandom becomes a place of resistance. Despite more than 15 years of fan scholarship, the mainstream media's portrayal of female idol music fans and fandoms has not changed much. Female fans are still fighting against the stigma. In doing so they realize the stigma is related to gender issues in general, and solidarity among themselves can contribute to greater social change. Kim Jaejoong fandom do promote friendship among fans; fans have a lot of fun together; they experience empowerment through heightened sense of independency, identification and agency; they fight social stigma collectively.

The feminist cultural theories developed in the West are insufficient to paint the full picture of global Kim Jaejoong fandom. The particularities of the cultural backdrop of global K-pop fandoms, which is Korean fandom, and the nature of the members of international fandom will be incorporated in my analysis to describe various

dimensions of solidarity and empowerment these fans experience in their own voice. I will attempt to explain how these empowered fans use their fandom activities as a coping strategy with the anxieties stemming from the dangers of modern life, not just limited to means of dreaming or hoping for idealized futures for women. Kim Jaejoong fans not only receive psychological support from the friendship but also experience changes in attitudes, values and world views, build practical professional connections in their interactions and obtain skills that promote their earning potentials in the process of participating in the planning and executing of fan projects.

3. Economy of Fandom

Consumption is often central to fandom practices and activities, given that fan activities revolve around consumer industries such as the media and sports events (Cristofari and Guitton 2016). Many assume that fans are susceptible to enticing consumerism and easily manipulated to open their wallets and devote time. Ironically, the economics of fandom has a totally different transaction rules and philosophy from capitalism; accumulation of social capital replaces the conventional monetary compensation. Fans engage in activities that

produce meaningful returns for them that are none-monetary. Drawing on Lewis Hyde's anthropological study, *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property* (1983), some scholars claim that fandom constitutes an alternative regime to capitalism, a gift economy (Scott 2010). Act of giving often serves as a binding mechanism that helps the fan community to sustain itself. While profit drives capitalism, community building drives the gift economy. Fan productions such as *fanart*⁸ and *fanfiction*⁹ are to be distributed for free as an unspoken rule among fans, but fans with more nonmonetary currency may be able to exercise greater influence and gain recognition in the fandom. This frame is useful in explaining the economy of Kim Jaejoong fandom. For example, since the first language of global Kim Jaejoong fandom is not Korean, they have to rely on volunteer translators for information about Kim Jaejoong, especially when Kim Jaejoong's agency is not one of the major entertainment company in Korea and promotional materials or information in English are extremely scarce. These volunteer translators do accumulate significant non-monetary currency as well as volunteer fan fiction writers, fanart artists, fancam and fanphoto producers.

⁸ A fanart in K-pop scene is defined as an unofficial art work of any medium of a fan subject created by fans that is usually without consent from the fan subject.

⁹ Fanfiction writing is immensely popular and wide spread in K-pop scene and is defined as a novel written by a fan based on imagined characters awarded to the fan subject.

Patryk Galuszka further defines the new economy of fandom as a condition in which empowered fan communities use the democratizing potential of new social media to communicate and cooperate with artists without the mediation of the traditional recording company (2015). This is in line with Kim Jaejoong's active, direct engagement with his fans via social media such as Twitter and Instagram bypassing his agency. This direct communication also reinforces fans' sense of empowerment. They feel their voices are heard, the fan subject listens to their feedback and their wants and needs are reflected in the choices of the artist's future activities. In turn, they feel the sense of satisfaction contributing to the growth and evolution of the artist.

The economy of fandom frame will be used in conjunction with the feminist view of fandom's potential to empower women. Kim Jaejoong fans not only accumulate nonmonetary capital such as trust, appreciation, and leverage power over the entertainment company but also acquire valuable practical skills and adopt attitudes that contribute to improve their material conditions and future success through their fan activities.

4. Why Study Kim Jaejoong Global Fandom?

The media fandom studies in the West had been heavily concentrated on the textual readers of virtual world such as TV drama series and movies like Star Trek and Harry Potter. Studies on celebrity and star fandoms and their relatively long term loyalty compared to textual readers and fan identity are extremely scarce (Duffett, 2013). Most conspicuous fandoms in Korea are idol fandoms and they are becoming more visible as of late, but Korean fan studies have been concentrated in the economic side of Hallyu and the global popularity of K-pop, vastly ignoring the human side of it. Probing into Kim Jaejoong fandom may render a unique perspective on the actual lives of fans involved in this cultural phenomenon.

As Cristofari and Guitton emphasized, being an *acafan* is not just useful in studying fan communities, it is arguably necessary (2016). Being a part of fandom, eliciting trust from fans without being restricted to only publicly available data, is a crucial way to gather comprehensive and reliable information and to paint a comprehensive picture of fan communities. I have been a Korean to English and English to Korean translator for anything and everything related to Kim Jaejoong for more than 5 years. I translate innumerable news articles, online information and postings about Kim Jaejoong, issues in Korean Kim Jaejoong

fandom, etc. and post them on my Twitter account. During his concerts, I translate his comments real time; I translate the drama he is in real time when it is on air. My English translations are then re-posted in other fan sites and fan forums verbatim or translated into other languages and posted. I have also organized and involved in countless fan projects such as production and distribution of fan-made goods¹⁰, online campaigns and assisted many global fans with delivery of their gifts and fan supports to Kim Jaejoong's agency. Rendering my service without expecting any monetary compensation, I have accumulated great deal of trust and friendship in this community. Based on this trust, fans actively engaged in the survey that I am using in this paper and shared their inner most emotions in very frank manner with me, and in turn, I could gather comprehensive and reliable information from them.

Kim Jaejoong's global fandom is worthy of systematic analysis for at least two other reasons: *Dongbangsinki* is an iconic K-pop idol group representative of the second generation K-pop idol groups that gained truly multinational fandoms for the first time in its history. The

¹⁰ Fan-made goods range from photobooks made of photos taken by fans to keyrings and fabric dolls designed by fans to be sold mainly to fans as collector's items or to be used as promotional items to allure potential fans. These are different from merchandizes produced by the artist's agency for profit. All profits generated from "selling" these goods are usually used to support the artist's promotion: Sending gifts, treats and meals to drama production team and actors involved in the artist's drama, buying CDs and distribute to radio stations and other places or donated to a charity of the artist's choice. These activities are designed to draw media attention and enhance the positive image for the artist.

number of fans who joined their official fanclub and other fansites reached more than one million worldwide at one point. Kim Jaejoong debuted as a member of group *Dongbangshinki* in 2003 as a five member (Hero Jaejoong, Mickey Yuchun, Xiah Junsu, Youknow Yunho, and Max Changmin) K-pop boyband also known as *Tohoshinki*, TVXQ! or 東方神起, internationally. Encouraged by the phenomenal success of one of Korea's first generation idol group H.O.T. in Korea, TVXQ!'s label SM Entertainment (SM 엔터테인먼트, SME)¹¹ saw opportunity in fast growing Chinese market and targeted the whole Asia as their potential market when they formed TVXQ!, as reflected in the group's title and member's stage names that resemble four-character Chinese idioms. After the group's successful debut in Korea, SME exported the group to Japan, the world's second largest market for music, but they were not received well at first. They had to restart from the bottom and reinvent themselves as Korean idol produced in Japan, they sang songs composed and written by Japanese. Huge success followed as Japanese embraced them as if they were one of their own idol groups. Then, the realty hit the fans in 2009 when TVXQ! was at the height of their career. Kim Jaejoong, Park Yuchun and Kim Junsu

¹¹ SM Entertainment, established in 1995 by Lee, Soo-man, is one of the top grossing entertainment companies based in South Korea, which operates as a record label, talent agency, music production company, event management and concert production company, and music publishing house.

formed group JYJ after they broke off from K-pop giant, SM Entertainment over “slave contract” dispute. SME’s exploitation of the group members, JYJ’s subsequent lawsuit against the SME that forced SME to rewrite contracts with their artists, JYJ and their global fandom’s systematic, organized fight against SME and Korea’s whole entertainment industry outside and inside of the Korean legal court system that is still ongoing had been chronicled in detail in many news articles and books (Lee S., 2013).

Kim Jaejoong fandom supported TVXQ! and fought for JYJ because he was part of the group and loved the group. They welcomed Kim Jaejoong’s long awaited solo activity as an actor since he was ban from TV music or variety programs. They went head-over-heels when he released his first solo mini album titled *I*; he released two full length studio albums, *WWW* and *NO.X*, since then, and is keep developing his own musical style, distinguished from mainstream K-pop. He began serving his active military duty on March 30, 2015 as a member of the 55th Infantry Division of Republic of Korea’s Army’s military band and was discharged on December 30, 2016. Kim Jaejoong still maintains unwavering global following, and gaining new fans even while serving his military duty. Behind his phenomenal success is this complex, resilient, multifaceted community of transnational fandom consists of women who experience solidarity and empowerment among themselves

in their everyday life online and offline. To repay the fans who waited for him for the last two years of his hiatus, Kim Jaejoong held a free fansigning event the day after his discharge. More than 2,000 fans from all over the world flew into Seoul in less than 2-week notice.

Classically, celebrity and star fandom had been considered a women's fandom. The global K-pop idol fandom is not an exception and has dramatically disproportionate gender distribution. Even though male fans of K-pop girl-groups¹² are multiplying, still overwhelming number is women fans even in K-pop girl-group fandoms. Historically, sports fandom has been male dominant fandoms (Fiske, 1992). Social networking platforms like Twitter, Instagram and Face Book and YouTube attracted both men and women from all over the world to K-pop, however, their fandom cultures have been manifested in vastly different qualities and forms. Though *ppadori* (빠돌이) or male idol fans are small in number, they are not considered socially disadvantaged or discriminated (Kang 2015). Kim Jaejoong fandom is predominantly women, identical to other K-pop fandoms. The significance for this study is found in Kim Jaejoong fandom's age distribution and social status. The overwhelming majority of Kim Jaejoong fans doesn't fit the image of delusional, screaming teenage girls, which is the iconic image of K-pop fans. It is an internationally

¹² A girl-group refers to a K-pop idol group consists of all girl members.

organized network of seemingly *normal*, highly educated, single women with solid professions. Overwhelming number of fans in Kim Jaejoong fandom belong to this atypical, often overlooked category of fans in the K-pop fandom. What can be the underlying factors underpinning this characteristics? Are these women a collection of socially isolated, inapt, rejected women attempting to compensate for the absence of *authentic* relationships in their lives as some early psychologists suggest? Are they chronically attempting to compensate for a perceived personal lack of autonomy, absence of community, incomplete identity, lack of power and lack of recognition? If so, how can one explain the prevalence of this common symptom among the women in this day and age, particularly the highly educated, successful career women who seem not to lack anything socially? There can be common fundamental social undercurrents to this phenomenon. The rapidly industrialized parts of East Asia are facing almost identical sets of social problems: Ultra-low fertility rates, persistent gender inequality, over emphasis on academic achievement, to name a few. This research will be significant in identifying and describing how the changes or un-changes in social norms and gender attitudes affect lives of women living in them, manifested in the international sisterhood of K-pop fans. Much more so than the West, idol fans are still heavily stigmatized in non-Western societies, despite their growing number and visibility. For one, there

supposed to be no public, open gender discrimination in the developed Asian countries, however, things change quickly once one enters the private sphere where the traditional gender role still reigns. This discrepancy may be one of the reasons why the successful women are drawn to this alternative, audience community and thrive. Some of distinguishing characteristics of K-pop global fandom such as fan support culture and bitter inter/intra fandom wars possibly originate from the particularities of early Korean idol fandom practices, which have been also influenced by Japanese fan culture. And still others are closely related to the social changes and un-changes that affect women.

Since Kim Jaejoong's appearance on TV music programs and variety shows is blocked by SM Entertainment and the mainstream Korean media establishment, he has not been a direct beneficiary of Korean government's massive Korean Wave Globalization Project. His fandom not only have been relying on each other for maintenance and expansion of the fandom but also has to fight for their artist's rights. In addition, the scarcity of information available in English forced fans to flock into social media and actively seek out for allies. As the result, they built a very close-knit community, different from other Western music fandoms or J-pop fandoms. Tracing the unique evolutionary path of this transnational fandom and the transformation of the individual fans in it for the 13-year span of its existence can shed light on an idol

fandom's impact on individual, societal, and global level. K-pop industry and other K-pop fandoms can also learn a tip or two in overcoming the biggest threat they are currently facing: short lifespan of their idol group's popularity.

III. Methodology and Research Design

1. Qualitative Research

Given the relative scarcity of prior researches on the transnational K-pop fandom and how they maintain their community, a qualitative approach was adopted for this study. The qualitative approach has been described as particularly useful for reconstructing the perception and experience of individuals (Lock, Spirdugo & Silverman, 1987). The individual's knowledge, understanding and perspectives are the most appropriate target for inquiry since each individual creates his or her own reality. *Acafans* often resort to auto-ethnography method to study his or her own fandom critically and reflectively (Duffett, 2013). Hills claims, "personal is political" and "personal is cultural" (p. 72). I adopted the autoethnographic method to share my own history and experience as a member of this community and my interactions with other fans first, and will incorporate my story into the stories appear in the survey and interview. Autoethnographic method was defined as follows by Manning and Adams (2015):

...a research method that foregrounds the researcher's personal experience (*auto*) as it is embedded within, and informed by,

cultural identities and con/texts (*ethno*) and as it is expressed through writing, performance, or other creative means (*graphy*). More specifically, it is a method that blends the purposes, techniques, and theories of social research—primarily ethnography—with the purposes, techniques, and theories associated with genres of life writing, especially autobiography, memoir, and personal essay.

Manning and Adams further argue that autoethnographers often focus on their experiences with cultural identities, popular texts, and a community's attitudes, beliefs, and practices, and study these phenomena by doing fieldwork. It includes observing and interacting with others, conducting archival research, and directly participating in community life. They often take “field notes” of their experiences; consult with relevant research and theories about the identities, texts, attitudes, beliefs, and practices; and may interview members of the culture to inform their understandings. The autoethnographic method will enrich the thick description of the unique community that I belong to.

The referenced research papers and books originally written in Korean were translated into English and paraphrased by me when not

available in English. The survey and interview results gathered in Korean were also translated and paraphrased by me.

2. Twitter Analysis

Twitter has been identified as an important new medium that facilitates the connection and communication within a fandom or other communities of taste. Fans' self-awareness and self-determination are manifested in their usage of Twitter to establish and maintain communities of fandom, to exchange fan knowledge, and to plan fan activities (Highfield et al., 2013). Kim Jaejoong global fandom shows strong presence in Twitter and utilizes Twitter for the same purpose.

I joined Twitter on February 25, 2011 after Kim Jaejoong set up his Twitter account (initially, @mjjeje and currently, @bornfreeonekiss)¹³ in 2010, so did a lot of my followers, without knowing what Twitter was or how it worked (See Figure 1). Soon we the fans realized that

¹³ Kim Jaejoong actively communicated with his fans directly through his initial Twitter account @mjjeje, which had more than 1 million followers. It was considered a lifeline to fans who cannot see him on any of the Korean TV programs at that point. But this account was hacked in November, 2011, and he closed this account. He restarted Twitter with a new account @bornfreeonekiss in 2012, and his last active tweet was uploaded on March 29, 2015, the day before his enlistment. His follower number is at 829,000 as of January 17, 2017. Since his return from army, Instagram (@jj_1986_jj) became his prime mode of communication. His Twitter has been linked to his Instagram so he can post identical posting simultaneously on Twitter and Instagram.

Twitter can be a powerful medium that connected not only to Kim Jaejoong but to each other when Kim Jaejoong is banned by Korea's mainstream media. We fervently followed each other's account, retweet each other's tweets, hashtag Kim Jaejoong's name to increase exposure to the general Twitter audience.

Before I set out to recruit survey participants amongst my Twitter account (@crystalmoon64) followers, I used Tweepmap¹⁴ to map out my followers to check their geographical location and concentration (See Figure 2). Then, I ran Analytics by Twitter¹⁵ to assess my followers' basic demographic data including gender, age, language usage, and interests (See Tables 1 and 2) in order to obtain a rough profile on my followers. This analysis is not to be taken as absolute, scientific data, but a crude backdrop for the actual survey data. This data will be compared to the results I obtained from the survey participants.

¹⁴ Tweepmap is an independent online analytic tool that provides free analysis mapping of followers to individual Twitter users.

¹⁵ Analytics by Twitter is a free, basic analytic service provided by Twitter to its users. It provides the audience insights such as audiences' basic demographic data including gender and age distributions, top interests, countries they are from and languages they use based on the information provided by the users.

<Figure 1.> Twitter Starting date of @crystalmoon64 shown by TwiAge¹⁶.



Dear **Crystal Moon**! 😊, you have been
on **Twitter** for

**5 years, 8 months, 2
days**

(since 25 Feb 2011)

<Table 1.> List of Top 10 Countries of Follower Concentration for Twitter Account @crystalmoon64 as of October 28, 2016, Analysis by Analytics by Twitter.

Country Name	Audience Percentage	Country Name	Audience Percentage
South Korea	21%	United States	5%
Japan	18%	Malaysia	4%
Thailand	11%	Philippines	4%
Indonesia	7%	Saudi Arabia	3%
Vietnam	5%	Peru	2%

¹⁶ TwiAge is an independent application that provides free anniversary reminder and Twitter history to individual Twitter users.

As of October 28, 2016, I had 5,276 followers, and 79% of them were female. My followers were from 75 countries, covering all six continents, and most concentrated areas were Korea (28%), Japan (14.2%), Indonesia (8.1%), USA (8%), and Thailand (6.2%). English speakers make up 62%, Korean speakers at 44%, Japanese at 31%, Thai at 13% and Spanish at 6%. They are looking for music news and general information (77%), and interested in drama (73%), celebrity fan and gossip (69%), and music (59%). For age distribution, 46% of them were between the age of 18 and 24, 30 % was between 25 and 34, and 12% was between 35 and 44. Even though my account is obviously a fan girl account, the age distribution of my Twitter following does not fit the popular fan girl image of high school girls (refer to Figure 3. for the image and description of my account's homepage). In fact, only 2% of my followers are under 18.

<Figure 2.> Follower Distribution Map of Twitter Account

@crystalmoon64 as of October 28, 2016, Analysis by Tweepmap.



<Table 2.> Age Distribution of Followers for Twitter Account

@crystalmoon64 as of October 28, 2016, Analysis by Analytics by Twitter.

Age Category	% of Audience
13 to 17	2%
18 to 24	46%
25 to 34	30%
35 to 44	12%
45 to 54	7%
55 to 65	2%
Over 65	1%

I can assume that my followers are mostly women who are at least bi-lingual or tri-lingual in some cases; mostly proficient in English and have knowledge of some Korean or Japanese. This conclusion is based on the conversations I had with them on Twitter and their responses to my usual tweets consist of roughly 80% English and 20% Korean and my retweets in Japanese.

<Figure 3.> Screenshot of Homepage of Twitter Account @crystalmoon64 taken on October 31, 2016.



3. Open Ended Question Survey

Due to difficulties in data collection and analysis, the survey has been written in only two languages: English and Korean. This excluded most of the Japanese fandom, a significant portion, if not the biggest portion, of Kim Jaejoong fandom. Only two Japanese fans fluent in English and one fan fluent in Korean participated in the survey. Many Japanese fans regard Jaejoong not as Korean artist but claim him as their own because Kim Jaejoong is fluent in Japanese, recorded many songs in Japanese and was very active in Japan. Some Kim Jaejoong's Japanese fans are vocally anti-Korean. Japanese fandom is complex and deserves a separate study. In addition, Chinese Kim Jaejoong fandom is also underrepresented because Twitter is prohibited in China. Chinese fans are represented by ethnic Chinese fans from Hong Kong, Malaysia, Taiwan and Singapore.

I tweeted openly on September 29, 2016 that I was conducting a survey regarding Kim Jaejoong's global fandom, and any avid Kim Jaejoong fan can volunteer. This tweet written in English had been retweeted 21 times, 31 people liked it and it made 172 engagements¹⁷

¹⁷ Twitter engagement is calculated using the following four components: replies, retweets, comments and likes.

and 6,456 impressions¹⁸. On October 1, 2016 I tweeted the same information in Korean (13 retweets, 10 likes, 148 engagements and 4,037 impressions). I tweeted in English again on October 2. Some responded to this open call by either commenting on my tweet or sending me secret direct messages. I collected their email addresses via direct message and sent them surveys written in English or Korean. Also, I sent direct message to some of the followers who I communicate on regular basis and invited them to join the survey, since due to the nature of Twitter timeline, people can easily miss my open tweets.

After I announced the survey on my timeline, Kim Jaejoong's official Peru fan site's Twitter account administrator (@JJAddiction_), a Russian Jaejoong fan forum writer (@PaulineHoma), Indonesian Jaejoong fan account administrator (@bornfree1kissID), an Iranian fan page administrator (@JaejoongArabFan) and a Tunisian fan page administrator (@JaeJoongTunisia) volunteered to distribute the survey to Latin American fandom via their Face Book page, Russian fan forum, Indonesian fans and Arab fandom via their forum, respectively. They translated the English survey into Spanish, Russian, Indonesian, Persian, and Arabic and distributed to their respective fan page, fan site or fan forum. The participants were given my email address (crystalmoon0213@snu.ac.kr) by the administrators. Most of fans who

¹⁸ Twitter impressions refers to times a specific tweet appear on someone's timeline or search results.

can answer the questions in English emailed the survey directly back to me. Most surveys were returned within a week (by October 6, 2016). I collected the last survey on October 28, 2016. As the result, Latin American, Indonesian and Arab fans are overrepresented compared to my Twitter follower distribution.

The survey consists of five parts. The first part had nine items that assessed basic demographics: age, gender, nationality, ethnicity, marital status, education level, occupation, and length of membership. The questions in the second part mainly probe on the fan's conception of her relationship to her star and her identification as a fan: how they became a fan, if there was any particular reason that triggered them to turn into an avid or "obsessed" fan, if she perceives fan and "obsessed" fan mean the same thing, and what type of fan in her opinion. The third part is about the individual fan's perception of her relationship with the fandom and their choice in mode of communication, which aims to explore their sense of belonging to the fandom and nature of their interaction among themselves. Next, the fans are asked about how the fannish activities affect their lives and if there were any life transforming impacts. They are asked to list both positives and negatives. In the last section, fans are asked about their fan history. If they used to be or currently are fan of some other things or person, and

they are asked to compare Kim Jaejoong fandom with other fandom or fandoms they used to be or are currently part of.

4. In-depth Group Interviews

I met face-to-face with two separate Korean fan groups for group interviews. I talk to these two groups on a daily basis via Twitter and KakaoTalk¹⁹. The members of the first group are a teacher (33-year-old, single), a graphic designer (39-year-old, single) and a book editor (43-year-old, single). We met at a quiet café on October 2, 2016, and the participants first filled out the survey separately and went over the answers together, elaborating and augmenting their answers as needed. I asked them questions to clarify their answers and took notes. They also shared their opinions on Kim Jaejoong fandom freely. It lasted about four hours. The second group met on October 9, 2016 at Jholic, the café Kim Jaejoong owns, located in Myeongdong area, now relocated to Samseong-dong. The members are a college senior (24-year-old, single), a teacher (25-year-old, single), a sales manager (28-year-old single), a social worker (30-year-old, single), a graduate student/artist (33-year-

¹⁹ KakaoTalk is an application developed in Korea that works on multiple platforms such as cellular phones and tablets and on personal computers. You can send and receive text messages and make phone calls for free.

old, single), and a freelancer (33-year-old, married). The session had similar format and took about six hours.

5. In-depth Individual Interviews

I conducted two face-to-face interviews of two international fans. One Malaysian fan (44-year-old, single, ethnic Chinese, Banker) on September 17, 2016 when she visited Korea with her coworkers. This was my second time meeting her in person, though we communicate on Twitter almost daily. We met at JHolic, and the interview lasted about two hours. She shared her personal journey as Kim Jaejoong fan, and I asked her few supplementary questions to clarify her answers. She gave me her opinions about Kim Jaejoong fandom as well.

My second interview was with a Filipino Fan (28-year-old, single, travel consulting manager), who I talk to on Twitter time to time but met for the first time in person. This interview took place at JHolic also, the format was the same, and it took about one hour.

Other three interviews were conducted over Twitter Direct Messaging. The online personal chatting interviews were with a Singaporean (39-year-old, single, ethnic Chinese, merchandizer) a

Peruvian (23-year-old, single, college student), an Iranian (21-year-old, single, translator) and a Tunisian (25-year-old, single, English teacher, administrator for Kim Jaejoong Tunisian Homepage on Face Book). I asked them questions about fandoms in their country and region on top of their personal journey as Kim Jaejoong fan. Interview with the Singaporean Fan was conducted via LINE²⁰. I talk to her on a daily basis over Twitter and LINE and met her multiple times in Korea and traveled to Thailand, Hong Kong and Japan together.

I met the Filipino fan in person for the first time, though we talk time to time on Twitter. I mainly communicate with the other fans on Twitter, though they translate every material I translate into English into their language and post them on their Face Book based fan page.

²⁰ LINE is an application developed in Japan that works on multiple platforms such as cellular phones and tablets and on personal computers. You can send and receive text messages and make phone calls for free.

IV. Results

1. Yes, I Am a *Pasuni*

Before the break up of TVXQ!, my only fan friends were a coworker who was a casual fan of Yuchun, my sister-in-law who was also another light fan of Yuchun, and a friend who was fan of Junsu. In fact, we were all light fans at that point. We listened to their music, bought DVDs and CDs, searched YouTube for their Japanese concert video clips, etc. TVXQ! was a sensation at that time, and everyone knew about them. The number of their fan club member hit almost one million. We were friends first and fans second. Engaging in light fan activities were just a part of what we did as friends. I began subtitling Korean dramas on Viki²¹ primarily to use it as a cultural and Korean language educational tool for my sons. In the process, I met few *Hallyu* drama fan friends online.

Two factors had contributed in my transition from a casual fan to an avid fan. One, hearing the news of TVXQ!'s breakup. Out of fear that I may not be able to listen to Kim Jaejoong's healing voice due to the unjust system urged me to do something for him. I started reaching

²¹ Viki, a play on the words video and wiki, is a website streaming TV shows and movies from around the world featuring fan made subtitles. Check out this link for further information: www.viki.com

out to other fans in search of anything I could to help such as joining campaigns, and translating every news article and information about Jeajoong. Two, joining Twitter in 2011 and meeting fans there marked the beginning of my transformation into a dedicated fan and my entry into core group experiences within the fandom. It caused my outlook on life, attitude and behavior change. I traveled to countries that I've never been to; I spent serious money for my own enjoyment for the first time in a very long time. As much as my family and nonfan best friends had, my fan friends actually inspired me and encouraged me to pursue a master's degree in Korean studies at this age (I was born in 1964). I experienced the enabling power of fandom first hand; it provided me with sense of belonging, independence, courage to change my life for better, speak out for what I believe is worthy, and precious friendship that made all of the above possible.

After following few people who tweeted Kim Jaejoong's photos and information and few failed attempts to talk to some of them, I began forming more meaningful online friendships. My first Twitter friend was a Korean JYJ fan in her early 40s who is fluent in Korean, Japanese and English. She is a single, marketing executive for a multinational corporation. We met regularly to have dinner and drinks and traveled all over Korea and Asia until she was offered a new position in Japan and

relocated. She calls me *eonni* (언니), an older sister in Korean, and we still communicate via LINE, KakaoTalk and Twitter.

My Twitter following began multiplying fast as I began twitting my English translations on a more regular basis, as I had more free time after sending my youngest off to university. I was about to hit by the “empty nest syndrome” in full force just like other moms, who come to sudden realization that they have invested their lives for more than 20 years in their child or children. My two children had left the nest; a part time job with a potential to be promoted was all I was left with. But I had to relocate to the city where my husband was working at the time. I was leaving a physical and psychological community that had been a home for me for more than 10 years but I still had my online psychological community that sustained me during this time of desperation. I never knew at the time that it was the beginning of a significant life transforming experience for me. I met many more fans on Twitter and at the concert venues. I have three core groups I engage in both online and offline at this point that I share my life with: One global group and two Korean groups. We do exchange information about Kim Jaejoong and plan projects mainly but we do much more.

I met my global group in early 2014 when I was invited to join a Face Book and Twitter based international fan site for Kim Jaejoong as a translator before Kim Jaejoong took his first leading role in a drama,

MBC's *Triangle*²². My global group consists of myself, a Japanese (nurse, single in early 50s) a Singaporean (marketing specialist, single in late 30s) and an Australian (housewife in mid 40s). We do translations on daily basis: once I translate Korean materials to English, my Japanese fan friend, who also edits videos and upload subtitles, translates them into Japanese. They all take photos or fancams²³ except me during concerts or events featuring Kim Jaejoong. I usually do real-time translation of Kim Jaejoong's comments. We talk everyday via Line; our topic of conversation covers about everything from job hunting and relocation to health issues and family issues that we seldom reveal to our nonfan friends or family. We understand there is no prejudice or judgement involved in our conversation. We can rely on each other for advice, support and encouragement. We meet each other when they come to concerts held in Korea and also in other concert tour stops in Asian cities. We purchase tickets and fan goods for each other and each other's friends in advance without collecting money. Since I do more purchasing for them because I am staying in Korea, they share their credit card information with me, including the secret codes. This is a level of trust you rarely see among your own siblings.

²² Check out the following link for more information or to view the MBC drama *Triangle*: <http://www.imbc.com/broad/tv/drama/shj/>

²³ Fancam refers to videos filmed by fans during concerts or other events that are uploaded and shared in online platforms such as YouTube or social media sights like Twitter, Face Book, Instagram or blogs either to public or closed networks.

My two Korean groups are the participants of my two group interviews. We communicate primarily through KakaoTalk and Twitter on daily basis. Although our Twitter accounts are primarily for Kim Jaejoong fan twits, and twits of funny, cute or pretty things to relieve everyday stress, substantial amount of twits and re-twits are of political and social issues, especially gender issues in Korean society. During election period we campaign to encourage our Twitter followers to go out and vote and take proof photos and upload it. More than often our Kakao group chatrooms turn into a forum for political and social issues. We don't stop at just discussions but go out to participate in anti-government rallies and sign petitions together. Our face-to-face meetings, however, are for fun most of times: to have meals together, to go on fan girl pilgrimages²⁴, go to movies or visit galleries together.

My first Korean group consists of nine, some I met over Twitter and some became close friends while campaigning for a directors' cut DVD of the second drama Kim Jaejoong played the leading role, KBS's *Spy*²⁵, which aired in early 2015. We also engage in the promotion, production and distribution of fan goods, fabric dolls designed by a member of our group. This team also has translation team members. All

²⁴ Fan girl pilgrimage is fans visiting places where the fans' idol or star visited. It can be any place from restaurants, cafes to drama filming locations. Fans order same food or drinks that their idol or star ordered; they also take photos at the same spot with same pose as their star.

²⁵ Check out the following link for more information or to view KBS drama *Spy*: <http://www.kbs.co.kr/drama/spy2015/>

our announcements go out in four languages: Korean, English, Japanese and Chinese. One is famed fan photographer and another one is popular fan artist. This group has members age range from early 20's to early 30s. All are single and working except one university student, one graduate student and one freelancer married to a very fan sympathetic husband. Actually, the members are closer to my children's age. I am so grateful that they do not discriminate me for my age, considering the fact that the ageism and generational gap are so prevalent and severe in Korean society.

My second Korean group is made up of five members: a nurse (single in late 20s), a school teacher (single in early 30s), a graphic designer (single in late 30s), and a book designer (single in early 40s). This group I met through the graphic designer fan I met while waiting to purchase concert goods at Kim Jaejoong's first solo concert tour in Seoul in 2013. This group meet almost once every weekend except the nurse fan who lives in a far coastal city. We travel together around Korea and to overseas concert tour stops; share hotel rooms; practically we are *eonnies* and *dongsaengs* (동생, younger sibling) to each other.

Kim Jaejoong fan community serve as a psychological community. I feel the sense of belonging to this transnational fandom, experience friendship online and in face-to-face gatherings, gain social capital by actively giving my time and talent freely to enrich the

community, and make so much shared memories with other fans. In doing so, I became more independent, assertive and vocal about what I believe is right and want, and act upon it. In the process of organizing fan projects, I became deft in the usage of social media and was able to obtain leadership skills, knowledges on Korean entertainment industry's operating mechanisms, and business transactions, actually improving my income generating potential. I experience empowerment beyond any feminist cultural theorists expected from a media fandom through this community every day. In the next section I will examine if other fans' experiences overlap with my journey.

2. Community of Their Own: Kim Jaejoong Fandom as a Community

2-1. Not One of Those Screaming Teenage Girls

The survey participants' basic demographic data are shown in Table 3. Kim Jaejoong fandom represented in the survey covers 35 countries in Africa, the Americas, Asia and Australia, and Europe. Kim Jaejoong fandom is not just limited to Asia or concentrated in certain places but truly global in nature. The map in Figure 3 illustrates Kim Jaejoong's second album, which didn't receive any promotion from his

agency since it was released during his military service, sweeping iTunes over all album and K-pop chart all over the world. His album ranked number one K-pop album in 34 countries; and those countries almost coincide with the countries represented in my survey. I can safely assume that the survey participants in this study do represent the Kim Jaejoong global fandom fairly well in geographical sense.

<Table 3.> Survey Participants' Basic Demographics

Category	Sub Category	Subtotal	Total
Country of Residence	Asia and Oceania: Australia(1), Hong Kong (2), Indonesia (10), Iran (39), Iraq (1), Israel (1), Japan (3) Korea (28), Malaysia (4), Myanmar (1), Philippines (5), Saudi Arabia (1), Singapore (5), Taiwan (1), Thailand (1), Vietnam (1)	104	178
	Africa: Tunisia (4)	4	
	Europe: Belarus (1), Belgium (1), France (2), Kazakhstan (2), Norway (1), Russia (4), Spain (3)	14	
	Latin America: Argentina (5), Bolivia (1), Brazil (1), Chile (2), Colombia (4), Mexico (19), Panama(1), Peru (14), Venezuela (1)	48	
	North America: Canada (1), USA (7)	8	
Gender	Female	174	178
	Male	4	
Age	13-19	15	178
	20-29	98	
	30-39	34	
	40 and up	30	
	No response	1	
Marital Status	Single, Divorced, Separated	159	178
	Married, Cohabitation	18	
	No Response	1	

Occupation	Middle School Student (1) High School Student (8) University Student (37) Graduate School Student (6) Medical School Student(1) Law School Student (1)	54	
	Housewife (8) Own Business (7) Freelancer (5) Administrative (30) Management (7)Teacher (17) Professor (1) Engineer (5) Writer (1) Editor (1) Psychologist (2) Lawyer (2) Translator (6) Doctor (1) Nurse (3) Researcher (1) Web Designer (2) Fashion Designer (2) Soldier (1) Pharmacist (1) Police Officer (1) Banking and Financing (2) Government Employee (1) Social Worker (1) Accountant (1) Flight Attendant (1) Media/Reporter (2) Dental Technician (1) Sales (1) Domestic Work (1) Unemployed (3)	119	
	No Response	5	

Out of 178 survey participants, only four were males. Usually, male fans receive special recognition from Kim Jaejoong during concerts since they are so few. So far, I only met one dedicated male fan friend face-to-face, who has been received as one of “us.” His Twitter account is @JajoongFanBoy and calls Jaejoong his *hyeong* (형, older brother). He flies in from Europe to Korea and Japan to attend concerts and even spent a semester at a Korean university as an exchange student. He seems to enjoy the special “male fan” status he earned by overcoming countless embarrassing moments of being the only guy in the fan signing event or the rental bus to a faraway concert venue. Two

other male fans confessed that they are shy to reveal that they are fans to other people because people will judge them. One male fan engages in dance covers of Jaejoong's songs at his university and became more popular among girls. Male fans are still exceptional cases. This fandom can safely be called almost exclusive fandom of women.

There are only 15 in the 13 to 19-year-old age bracket, out of which, only one is a middle school student and eight were high school students. This age distribution matches my Twitter followers' age distribution. There are 37 college students, six in graduate school, one in medical school, and another one in law school. The fandom is definitely not dominated by teenagers: average age of the fandom is 29.5 years. The youngest fan is 13 years old and the oldest is in her late 60s. The age distribution is almost even; this is definitely a multigenerational community. They work in diverse fields. Office workers, teachers, entrepreneurs, managers, engineers, translators, freelancers and nurses are the top occupations held by the fans in order. Only 18 participants are married or in cohabitation status. The vast majority is single. The stereotypical image of K-pop idol fans does not seem to apply to these women. Kim Jaejoong fandom consists of mostly single, highly educated, career women. Historically, the feminist cultural study tradition of the West considered teenage girl fans usually

“grow out” of it (Herrmann, 2008), this certainly does not apply to Kim Jaejoong fandom.

Kim Jaejoong fans answered they spend 3.89 hours per day on average for fannish activities. Fans who answered they are online 24/7 were excluded, so the average time spent on fannish activities can be actually even longer than 4 hours per day. They are connected virtually all day long including at work via Twitter, Face Book and other fan forums since they have access to smart phones and computer at work. Face-to-face meetups happen sporadically or on a regular basis (weekly, bi-weekly or monthly), mainly on weekends. Time devoted to fannish activities and Twitter and Face Book engagement increase exponentially at times of Kim Jaejoong’s activity, either a concert or drama appearance. Many of the survey participants have been administrators of fan pages in their language. Each language fan page or forum usually has a translation team (usually translate English materials to their language) and administrators who manage the page. These leaders are early adaptors of new media technology and serve as the transmitters and mediators of culture. They are regulars in other K-pop fan forums, writing reviews and post videos and photos of Kim Jaejoong. Thanks to active recruitment and promotional efforts by the fans in their own country, the global Kim Jaejoong fandom expanded even while he served his military service.

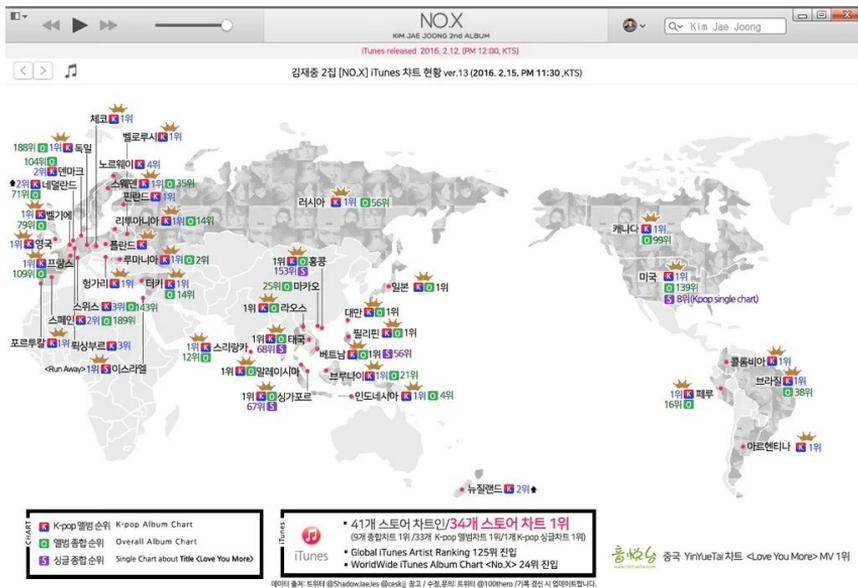
The survey participants have been Kim Jaejoong fans for 6.53 years on average, many have been fans for more than 10 years. This global fandom started before the start of globalization of K-pop; rather, they may have been the actual seeds for the globalization of K-pop. When they were asked if *Hallyu* was an influence in them becoming Kim Jaejoong fan, 71 out of 150 overseas fans (excluding 28 Korean fans) answered *Hallyu* was no factor for them, and they are neither really into *Hallyu* nor K-pop fans. Many of them used to be interested in Japanese culture and music, and “accidentally” found TVXQ! and Kim Jaejoong while surfing on YouTube in search of J-pop. Some Korean fans confess that they became fan after TVXQ! debuted in Japan for higher quality of J-pop production. This fandom was able to survive the group’s breakup and their long absence in TV music programs induced by SME and the invisible entertainment power cartel. Kim Jaejoong never received direct promotional and financial support other K-pop groups receive from the Korean government. Kim Jaejoong fans are fully aware of the unjust practices permeated in Korean entertainment industry, and many of them turned into an avid fan after they realized this. Some actively participated in boycott of SME artists and products. Some, however, welcomed Kim Jaejoong’s departure from SME for Kim Jeejoong is now free to pursue his own career path. They argue that Kim Jaejoong has evolved into a unique artist over time beyond the

quality of mass produced entertainment factory K-pop. This longevity is a distinguishing character of Kim Jaejoong fandom from other K-pop idol groups, which typically experience rise and fall (Son, 2013).

Kim Jaejoong fans do show up at airports when Kim Jaejoong flies in and out of their country, they scream loudly at his concerts, but those are more of special occasions. They are not just screaming teenage girls. Some became avid fan as a teenager at the height of TVXQ!'s popularity and grew up to become a university student or a career woman. Others became avid fans when they saw Jaejoong and other two members cried out for help for unjust treatment and exploitation they received from SME. These fans are referred to as *sosongipdeok* (소송 입덕, lawsuit entry fans). Fans who joined the fandom after the lawsuit tend to be more discriminating. They had to make a conscious decision to become Kim Jaejoong fan since he had no TV music program appearance for 5 years and no longer one of the hottest K-pop idol groups promoted by major entertainment companies or Korean government. Altogether, these highly educated, hard-working, mature single women remain Kim Jaejoong fans as they share their lives with other fans, encouraging and supporting each other and work together to promote their artist and expand their community every day online and offline. Their fan life is not solely based on fantasy or just

imagined alternate reality that they escape to, but it has been deeply integrated into their “real” life.

<Figure 3.> Screenshot of iTunes ranking chart for Kim Jaejoong’s Second Album NO.X taken on February 15, 2016 from DC Inside Kim Jaejoong Gallery²⁶



2-2. Sense of Community and Empowerment

2-2-1. Official Fan Club VS Grassroots Fan Community

²⁶ DC Inside Kim Jaejoong Gallery (A.K.A. DC Jellery) is a Kim Jaejoong fan forum. It is part of DC Inside, which is a South Korean internet forum, initially established to share photos primarily.

In the beginning, before fans could assemble on internet, Korean entertainment companies adopted Sae-ma-eul Movement²⁷ type of top down community mobilization strategy in order to harness the power of fandom. After SME set up an official fan club for H.O.T., the fans were encouraged to elect their own fan club president and local officials then they were acknowledged by SME. They figured that they could control the fandom by just manipulating the small number as leaders. Indeed, the leaders were given power over fans; they organized activities and projects and kept order but the leaders were more democratic and resistant than SME expected them to be. When SME didn't want to renew the contracts for all the members of H.O.T. and attempted to break up the group, fan club leaders organized a revolt against SME. This attempt by SME can be labeled as an early form of *brandom*: the pseudo-fan culture engineered by brand managers, eager to cultivate consumer labor and loyalty (Gauluszka 2015). After that horrendous failure to control the fans, SME changed their strategy and decided to just charge membership fee for TVXQ! official fan clubs in Korea (Cassiopeia) and Japan (Big East), but didn't elect leaders. The membership guaranteed special privileges such as small gifts and concert ticketing priorities. The official membership broke the Guinness

²⁷ Sae-ma-eul Movement is a rural development campaign initiated by the Korean government in the early 70s. Check the Saemaoul Undong webpage for more information. <http://www.saemaul.or.kr/>

World Record as the biggest fandom with 800,000 members. But that number doesn't really represent "avid fans" that we deal with in this study. One Korean comedian asked in a TV satire, how come TVXQ!'s album only sold 100,000 when the official fan club member boasts 800,000 to pinpoint the exaggeration made by SME (Lee M., 2013). Casual fans can join the official fan club but they are different from "real" fans. The more avid fans do join the official fan clubs but they also set up grassroots type of voluntary fan sites or community outside the official fan club where they can be more independent and autonomous in making decisions. The sense of belonging or identity official fan clubs insist upon fans do not usually stick well. The Republic of SM Town Assembly with flags representing each of SME's idol groups and their respective fandom ended up as a onetime thing. JYJ's agency, CJes Entertainment has paid membership official fan clubs in Korea and Japan but they are not considered fan communities by no means. Korean fan club members get free ticket to yearly fan expo for their membership fee, Japan fan club members receive concert ticketing priority. In fact, official fan clubs no longer dictate fans' activities or projects any longer for established fan communities. The entertainment companies' *brandom* strategies to induce a false sense of community (Pearson 2010) are much more complex these days but it is out of scope for this paper.

Kim Jaejoong fandom is this grassroots type of volunteer fan community maintained for fans by the fans. Fans are active rather than passive followers; they are aggressive investigators and critical commentators rather than docile receptors. When choosing their star, Kim Jaejoong, fans did exercise discernment and discretion. They seek out other fans in order to share their excitement and common emotions and to participate in fan activities or to volunteer. The need to be connected is more critical for international fans who have hard time getting information.

2-2-2. Psychological Community that Empowers Women

In essence, the advent of global Kim Jaejoong fandom as a relational and psychological community is deeply indebted to the proliferation of YouTube and rise of worldwide social networking system and its inter connectivity. It is a very new phenomenon still evolving. Fandoms existed before the internet revolution but, as with other communities, they were mostly limited to a region. Kim Jaejoong fandom started locally in Korea as a territorial community, it expanded to Japan, to greater Asia and to other parts of the world, breaking the national boundaries at the dawn of internet revolution. Now, both

territorial and relational community elements are present in Kim Jaejoong fandom. This global fandom not only has strong online presence and operate in virtual world, but it also has diverse multiple subsets of fans, who live in proximity and form intimate core groups that contribute to forge the fandom's unique culture and solidify the fans. Fandom seems to operate in multiple dimensions. One overarching, weak, web-based community, where solidarity in broader definition builds and variety of collective actions happen, few overlapping subgroups with slightly different identities and myriad small scale core groups within that broader community that either gather online and/or offline that offer a secure environment for deeper emotional connections, stronger bonds and empowerment.

The broader internet based global community on Twitter is place of solidarity for global Kim Jaejoong fans. There are four major subsets of fans currently identify themselves as Kim Jaejoong fans: OT5 or All fans (fans who still support the original group TVXQ! and all five members but Kim Jaejoong is their favorite member (or their 'bias') out of the five), JYJ fans (fans who support group JYJ but Kim Jaejoong is their bias), YunJae fans (fanfic fans who support couple shipping²⁸ of Jung Yunho and Kim Jaejoong but Kim Jaejoong is their

²⁸ Couple-shipping is fans making a fictitious couple out of two same sex group members and write stories or Photoshop pictures to create couple looks. Originated from fanfics and is hugely popular among K-pop fans.

bias), and Jaeharem (fans who only support Kim Jaejoong). OT5 fans sometimes overlap with YunJae fans; they support all five original members but into fanfics. Fans who only like one member of idol group are refer to as *gaein fan* (개인팬, individual fans). At first, individual fans were treated as outcasts in the group fandom along with *sasaeng fans* (사생팬, private life fans)²⁹ for their potential to break up the group. But as individual members began to expand solo activities to other areas such as acting, musical and solo performances, due to circumstances, the fandom naturally divided into subgroups of individual fans as the fandom matured. It was physically and monetarily impossible to follow up with every group and solo activities of every member. The individual fans of Kim Jaejoong call themselves “Jaeharem,” meaning Jaejoong’s brides. The origin of the name is uncertain but fans say that one day fans were fighting jokingly over who will marry Jeajoong and they ended up saying he has to be the “virtual husband” for everyone as the prince of his own harem. Dispute was settled peacefully. Even though they engage in fights all the time and get on each other’s nerves, it’s like sibling’s rivalry. If there is a voting for selecting the best looking K-pop idol or best vocal ever in K-pop

²⁹ Sasaeng fans are fans who follow their star’s private life beyond the legal or moral limit. They linger around the star’s residence and other private spaces and disturb the star. Sasaeng fans regularly hire taxies to chase the car their star is riding and gets into accidents.

history, Kim Jaejoong still gets the most votes because his fans unite to vote for him. Aware of the firepower of Kim Jaejoong fandom, popular K-pop sites such as All K-pop³⁰ or Soompi³¹ put Kim Jaejoong's name in popularity contests they conduct or articles to draw more clicks to their posting. Kim Jaejoong just won the Asia Popularity Award at the 31st Golden Disc Award given by Music Industry Association of Korea on January 13, 2017 for the album he released during his enlistment. The votes can be casted either by paying money or by participating in tedious online activities. Kim Jaejoong fans worldwide pitched in money to Chinese fans and Korean fans to vote on their behalf for Kim Jaejoong. He was not to be invited to the award show but fans plea to the broadcasting company by calling them and mentioning them on Twitter night and day, and they finally invited Kim Jaejoong in reluctance. Fans cried and Kim Jaejoong cried when his face came out on TV music show though he didn't get to perform. Fans in this broader community experience sense of community while participating in those fan activities together, at a weaker level. Participating in the survey for this study once again confirmed their sense of community.

³⁰ For more information on All K-pop please visit their website: www.allkpop.com

³¹ For more information on Soompi please visit their website: www.soompi.com

Fans solidify their identity through discussions among themselves. They feel proud to be a part of the fandom of a K-pop legend, but their identity become stronger in their respective subsets as Cassiopeia, YunJae, JYJers or Jaeharem. These subgroups actively exchange information and upload photos and videos they edited themselves and fan arts they created among their own subsets. These fan made items are not supposedly shared outside of the subsets, but they usually do get distributed outside of the subsets because members of each subset usually have spy accounts in other subsets. JYJ fans and Cassiopeia have had a long history of fan wars since the split. Even JYJ fans have fan wars among the three member fandoms usually over who is better, sometimes out of jealousy or seemingly unequal treatment from the agency. Many fans get tired of fan wars but even this can be an empowering experience for them. They eventually learn ways to present their arguments in logical ways because the flaws in their arguments are corrected by other fans, usually in forms of counter arguments. This broad fandom serves as a collective intelligence: If you learn to accept criticisms, you become tougher and become a better debater. But with any community, fandoms do have negative aspects. People do spread unfound rumors about Kim Jaejoong or attack each other with false accusations. Some got hurt and have left the fandom; but some filed lawsuit against the slanderer. One of the fans (participant No. 146, a 25-

yearold teacher, single) who has experience filing a lawsuit describes her experience as following.

I was in my early 20s when I filed a lawsuit against the person who harassed and attacked me online. Going to the police station to file a formal complaint and attending the court hearings have been all new, intimidating experiences for me at first. I guess I've become much more mature than someone my age through it all. I think it made me tougher. I learned to defend myself and how the Korean legal system worked. I now know the ways I can protect myself from malicious attackers. I feel calm under pressure and am ready to tackle on any challenges that lie ahead in my life.

She is not the only one who find individual empowerment in fandom. Many survey participants use keywords like assertive, independent, responsible, outgoing, extravert, intelligent, vocal, confident, sociable, and eager when asked to describe the changes happened in their personality trait after they spent some time in the fandom. They were shy or anxious about meeting new people before but after meeting "strangers" online and becoming friends with them because of Kim Jaejoong, they are not afraid of meeting new people any

longer. The discussions and debates among themselves boosted their confidence.

Fandom is still a place of resistance for women. Despite more than 15 years of fan scholarship, the mainstream media's portrayal of female idol music fans and fandoms has not changed much. Female fans are still fighting against the stigma. In doing so they realize the stigma is related to gender issues in general, and solidarity among themselves can contribute to social changes. Kim Jaejoong fan community serves as a counter-public sphere for single women. Kim Jaejoong fans are vocal in promoting advancement of women's rights and gender equality around the world. They also run campaigns to heighten the awareness of the importance of exercising one's right to vote that ultimately contribute to expansion of democracy. During the recent general election and presidential election, thousands of fans uploaded photos onto Twitter after they voted, Kim Jaejoong also joined the fans' campaign and uploaded his proof on his account. Kim Jaejoong Korean fans are on street every weekend these days to join the anti-government candlelight protest, and the global fandom are cheering on for the victory of Korean people and twitting and re-twitting the news real time.

Collectively, Kim Jaejoong fandom has experience in making a significant impact in history of Korean entertainment, which is another huge empowering moment in itself. As the news media portrayed

Jaejoong, Yuchun and Junsu as greed as the cause of TVXQ!'s breakup, TVXQ! fandom organized themselves to fight for their loved one's rights against the social injustice. They first educated themselves and decided to educate the public. They researched and have written articles exposing SME's unfair and inhumane treatment of its artists: One-sided demands on artists, severely strenuous schedule, unfair compensation and 13-year long duration of so-called "slave" contract. The articles then were translated into multiple languages and distributed among the global fans. Then, fans raised money to run series of newspaper ads that counter the press releases from SME. TVXQ fandom filed a petition to invalidate TVXQ's contract with SME and started their boycott against all SME products. The National Human Rights Commission of Korea began an in-depth inspection into SME's contracts in response. The Seoul Central District Court ruled in favor of JYJ in October, affirming their right to independently engage in entertainment activities and granted them injunction suspending the SME contracts; its ruling emphatically pointed out it was a "subjugating contract" with terms that are grossly incompatible with Korean labor and contract law. Korean Fair Trade Commission (KFTC) officially investigated SME for unfair contract terms. SME revised their standard contract (reduced contract duration to 7 years) and rewritten contracts with all of their artists. After JYJ fandom filed multiple petitions and complaints including one with

150,000 signatures gathered from around the world to KFTC, the National Assembly finally passed the Artist Welfare Act in 2012, and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism began the work on revising standard contract for entertainment industry. KFTC issued guidelines set up for fair trade among management, artist (trainee) and production companies. These shared memories of hardship and victory also cement the members to this community.

The feminist cultural study traditionally does not believe that the fandom activities can contribute to the increase of actual earning potential for women. However, fan activities and fandom actually develop practical skills and attitudes in fans that raise their income potential. First of all, it is imperative that you obtain some second or third language skills if you want to engage in Kim Jaejoong fandom. Even Korean fans, in order to enjoy Kim Jaejoong's activities in Japan, they resort to learn Japanese. Many international fans said their English skills improved a lot because most of the information they can get are translated into English, and they want to communicate with Korean fans, who are usually proficient in English, and fans from other countries. International fans also learn Korean and Japanese for Kim Jaejoong is fluent in both languages and speak in these two languages at his concerts. Many fans involved in translation works in fan communities

actually went on to become English teachers and professional translators in their country.

Fans start drawing fan arts or aspire to become a fan photographer, fan video producer or fanfic writer to express their admiration for their subject of affection or to get recognition from other fans. They work hard to improve on that skill at the appreciation and encouragement of other fans. Some fans became photographers for magazines and work as freelance video editors. One fan started baking cakes in hopes that someday she can gift the cake she baked to Kim Jaejoong. She uploaded pictures of her decorated cakes for other fans to see. Fans saw the potential in her and encouraged her to realize her new found potential; now she is baking professionally.

Not all fans experience such improvement of practical skills but many recognize the need to raise earning potential by improving the skill sets they already have or acquire new skills. Fans who became fans as teenagers testify that early on, they realized that if they want to get something they want, they need to earn money. They can't steal or beg their parents for money to buy fan goods or music CDs. They had experience holding part time jobs and saving their allowance. Contrary to the public misperception that teenage fangirls must be out of control and irresponsible, they studied hard and worked hard so they can exercise their rights. Almost all of them went to universities and became

career women. The best thing about having a job, they say, is that they don't have to worry so much about spending money on what they want.

Only 51 out of 178 participants said their fan engagement is strictly online basis, though almost everyone still had smaller core group of online fan friends they talk to on a regular basis. More than two thirds answered they have core group of fan friends they meet face-to-face at fan gatherings or as friends. Core groups within the broader fandom community is where the fans feel the strong sense of psychological community. Many times, these core groups are based in territory: Korean fans, Japanese fans, Singaporean fans, Filipino fans, Peru fans, Iranian fans, Tunisian fans, Russian fans, etc. Some consist of combination of different countries like my international fan group that meet up online. Latin American fans have transnational core groups that communicate in Spanish; Arab fans have transnational core groups that speak Arabic; fans from former Soviet Union countries have transnational groups that can communicate in Russian.

Fans describe fan friends in these core groups as best friends, sisters, fellow soldiers or family. The intimacy level they feel toward fan friends are much stronger or about equal compared to their nonfan friends or even blood sisters. There are only few exceptions who consider them as just casual friends who they share the same interest. Most of them answered that they will definitely keep in touch with them

even if they quit being Kim Jaejoong fan. Describing fan friends as fellow soldiers may sound too much to some lay people but for Kim Jaejoong fans who have been fighting the systematic ban imposed by Korean entertainment industry, the comradery they feel toward each other is all too real.

Fans felt more comfortable among fan friends because, they claim, fans are usually non-judgmental. They understand the feeling of loving someone without expecting anything in (monetary) return. Spending money on (seemingly useless) fan goods or devoting their free time on online voting have meaning. They are more open minded and understanding and respectful of others since they know what it feels like to be mocked and misunderstood for what or who they like. They tend to be more open to other cultures and more tolerant toward people from different cultural backgrounds. K-pop boy bands are not received highly in many countries among the general public, especially by men and older generations. Their heavy makeup, androgynous hair dos and costumes are ridiculed. Their not-so original music and dance moves do not impress the public, who receive American or Western music without such filter. Kim Jaejoong fans say, if Kim Jaejoong fans are not in proximity, befriending other *K-poppers* or K-pop fans of other K-pop idol group provide relief for them. Their nonfan friends and family try to be understanding and respectful of their taste in music, yet don't

really understand that fan life is not just about their taste in music but a different attitude, life style and set of rules that become integral to their reality and identity. Not being able to be understood, they naturally gravitate toward people who understand that part of their life. With fans, you can share everything, they say. Even if you meet a new Kim Jaejoong fan for the first time, you feel like you've known her for a long time. Because the common denominator, the fan identity and set of core values of your being, is already there, you don't have to explain much. By just start talking about how you became a fan, what your favorite Kim Jaejoong song is, and you found a friend. This is the reason why you go to an overseas concert alone and don't have to feel alone. You know you have a friend waiting next to you.

What they do when they meet online or face-to-face seems almost identical to what anyone would do with their “normal” friends on surface. They chitchat about the weather, politics, family issues, etc. They share cute animal pics or funny videos and smile or laugh together. They go out or gather at someone’s home to eat together, go to movies, go shopping or work out together. The difference is they have more topics to talk about withholding any judgement. Of course, they share stories about Kim Jaejoong and what’s going on in Kim Jaejoong fandom. In addition, since Kim Jaejoong is from Korea, global fans take interest in Korean culture and Asian culture in general and their society

and politics, they are open to more discussions and they challenge themselves to try Korean or Asian cuisine or even learn to cook Korean food. Fan friendship reinforces expansion of world view and evolves relatively richer and complex compared to their nonfan friendship, while they accumulate more and more in shared memories. One elaborates it this way:

If I meet up with my friends from college I haven't met in a while, I feel awkward. The topics are always the same: marriage, makeup or career. We run out of things to talk about fairly quickly. Uncomfortable silences on my part... I pretend to be interested in their conversation and try to be attentive, but I find myself frequently looking at my watch. It's different with fan friends. We can pick up conversations right away from where we left off because we have been keeping up with Kim Jaejoong's news and have much more diverse conversation topics.

Fandom had been also credited for representing ways of coping with mundane, often repressive material living conditions, and provides means of dreaming or hoping for idealized futures for women (Aden 1999). In this context fandom refers to both the positive effects fan

practices have on sense of personal and psychological well-being and group pleasure fans feel. The most frequent human contact for career women usually is professional, and their coworkers are usually considered friends. When they go out with coworker friends, it usually seems like an extension of work. They can't fully relax; you have to be vigilant about your reputation. Fan friends are different. Fan activities are first and foremost for fun; your social status or reputation don't matter in this place, shielded from the dominant social norms. One fan says, "We all come from different backgrounds but speak the same language of love for Kim Jaejoong." Fans giggle a lot when they are together in person or lol, hahaha or kkkkk³² or use laughing emoticons a lot online. They are experts at teasing each other and self-deprecating humor. They spazz together looking at new photos or videos of Kim Jaejoong. It is definitely an everyday escape from the routine, mundane and a stress reliever.

In addition, in this relaxed, judgement free environment, fans feel safe to share their innermost agonies and intimate fears that they dare not to share with anybody else, including their own family. Several of the survey participants confess that fandom literally saved their lives. Fans provide moral support in multiple dimensions. Kim Jaejoong's music was the only consolation for a fan after her parents' divorce; fan

³² lol is a contraction of laugh out loud, and hahaha(ㅎ ㅎ ㅎ) kkkkk(ㅋ ㅋ ㅋ ㅋ) are all laughing sounds in Korean.

friends kept a fan's side when she decided to leave an abusive relationship and through the whole process; a rebellious and suicidal teenage fan of heavy metal felt her heart melt when she first heard Kim Jaejoong's healing voice and she was motivated to go to college and now studying hard in medical school to become a doctor; a professor claims that she won't be able to control her depression without the support of her fan friends. In varying degrees but everyone agrees that they get healed by listening to Kim Jaejoong's voice and by the mutual encouragement fans give each other.

Did all the empowerment and enabling experiences they go through including the financial independence and self-assurance and awareness of the persistent gender inequality have some influence over their attitude about marriage? Almost all of the survey participants in their late 20s and up agree that Kim Jaejoong fans do not really feel much need to get married. Their priority is their education and career. They claim that they are not desperate to settle down for "less." Some say jokingly, their standard is way too high since Kim Jaejoong is the perfection of a guy. These fans are not delusional. They do not dream of actually marrying Kim Jaejoong. Especially, many international fans' dream is to see Kim Jaejoong in person once in their life.

The Malaysian banker fan (single in her mid 40s) says, she does not feel the need to get married though her mom always pressures her to.

It is hard for a highly educated, successful women to find a match. Besides, she does not feel the need to find a man to complete her life. She is happy as she is and doesn't want her freedom taken away from her, suggesting marriage is binding. Among all 12 members of my two Korean core groups, only one is currently married, one is dating, one still think of marriage as an option. The rest, three quarter of them decided not to get married. I asked them if their fan life had something to do with their decision. They all said, no. It is more to do with what's going on in the general society. First of all, misogyny in Korean society make them fearful and mistrust men in general. The burden of child rearing, interruption in their career, relationship with the in-laws are all too risky for them, they explained. The fandom provides an alternate community or family that they can depend on. They are satisfied at the moment that they can afford their fan life style: buying fan goods, going to concerts, travel overseas time to time.

2-2-3. Gift Economy at Work

Consumption is often central to fandom practices and activities, given that fan activities revolve around consumer industries such as the media and sports events (Cristofari and Guitton 2016). Many assume

that fans are susceptible to enticing consumerism and easily manipulated to open their wallets and devote time. Ironically, the economics of fandom has a totally different transaction rules and philosophy from capitalism; accumulation of social capital replaces the conventional monetary compensation. Fans engage in activities that produce meaningful returns for them that are none-monetary. Drawing on Lewis Hyde's anthropological study, *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property* (1983), some scholars claim that fandom constitutes an alternative regime to capitalism, a gift economy (Scott 2010). Act of giving often serves as a binding mechanism that helps the fan community to sustain itself. While profit drives capitalism, community building drives the gift economy.

How does a gift economy work exactly? Fans actively engage in variety of secondary productions from fan arts, photobook making, video filming and editing to making fan goods such as key chains, USBs and fabric dolls. As an unspoken rule, these are not to be sold for profit. If you sell it for profit, you are no longer a fan but a merchant and lose all your trust and standing in the fandom. The fanfic authors, fan artists, fan photographers and video shooters distribute their product for free, gift their creations to fans for their enjoyment and as tools for promotion of Kim Jaejoong. These fan activities are crucial since Kim Jaejoong is banned from TV music and variety shows and very limited

exposure. It is hard to maintain and expand his fandom. The translators and subtitle makers offer their service for free voluntarily. If there is fan projects, for example distributing penlights to light together as a surprise for Kim Jaejoong during a concert, fans volunteer their time to participate in that activity and to make it successful.

The reason behind this gifting is very simple. They want to do something for Kim Jaejoong. Fans say engaging in this type of unselfish acts make them feel good, and it's like gift for Kim Jaejoong and people who love Kim Jaejoong. Even if fans start with a "pure" motive, these fans do accumulate nonmonetary currencies like trust, influence, recognition and appreciation. Fans with more nonmonetary currency may be able to exercise influence on decisions fandom makes. Some scholars perceive this as a hierarchy that exists in any fandom. For example, since the first language of global Kim Jaejoong fandom is not Korean, they have to rely on volunteer translators for information about Kim Jaejoong, especially when Kim Jaejoong's agency is not one of the major entertainment company in Korea and promotional materials or information in English are extremely scarce. These volunteer translators do accumulate significant non-monetary currency as well as volunteer fan fiction writers, fan art artists, fancam and fan photo producers. However, the recognition and appreciation from fans reward fans with satisfaction, the power they have does not dictate the decisions fandom

makes. Kim Jaejoong fan clubs and fan sites no longer have fan club leaders but group of administrators and decision making process is very much transparent and democratic.

The fabric doll one of my core group produced can be an excellent illustration of this gift economy at work. My core group was having a birthday gathering for one of the members in 2015 after Kim Jaejoong enlisted in army for his compulsory military service. Fans were getting thirsty of new excitement but we only had few photos of Kim Jaejoong in the training camp. Our Chinese translator suggested that we design a fabric doll, which was popular among other K-pop idol fans at the time. During Kim Jaejoong's military service, we wanted to keep our fans excited. I conferred with my other core groups and everybody agreed that it would be a great idea. We did some market research online and searched for factories, while the fan artist came up with the design for the doll.

Once the design was complete, we set up an independent Twitter account and a website for our fabric doll named Chestnut Head J Doll³³ and uploaded the doll design with no sample of the doll yet. Fans wanted to send money right away. The price of the doll was set at the production cost plus little bit of money that we collect to be used for future support for Kim Jaejoong, about \$30 and another \$25 to \$80 for

³³ For more information on this project check the official website: <http://19860126.com/jgoods/>.

shipping. For international fans the doll was very pricy. Since three so-called *named fans*³⁴ (a fan artist, a photographer and a translator) were working in the project, fans had no doubt that we would deliver. They started sending money to a designated PayPal account that we set up in order to save international bank transfer fees for international fans. The account was locked and we received a phone call from PayPal few days later. They were so shocked so much money was flooding into our account so fast from so many different countries around the world. They suspected that we were some type of scam. We explained to them we were a nonprofit fan community but they couldn't grasp the concept at all. After countless emails and phone tagging with PayPal Korea and PayPal Asia based in Taiwan, we finally convinced them and we came to an agreement that they withhold 30% of the fund until all the goods were delivered. Now that we are in the middle of the production of third round of doll production, and PayPal now withhold only 10% of the fund until the delivery is complete.

The whole process involved the designer, three translators and one person in charge of accounting who is also our photographer. Twelve fans helped out inspecting all the dolls and packing them and shipping them out. We operate like a factory for at least a couple months. Why do we do this? Because we know first of all, these dolls

³⁴ Named fan is a fan who other fans recognize by their nickname or real name by just looking at it because they gained fame through working hard for the star.

would make someone's day. We delivered a few thousands of Chestnut Head J dolls to every corner of the world including Puerto Rico, where the Korean Postal Services has no regular direct delivery service. Fans from Peru asked if they can send money in instalments so they can deposit money whenever they get their paycheck. An Indonesian fan walked six hours twice to get to a bank to make international money transfers. Secondly, we enjoy working together for the joy of it without expecting any monetary gain. It's not something we have to do but it's something we volunteered to do. Economy of fandom cannot exist completely outside the market system. The doll making factories do get profit out of it. You can still say it is a different inside the fandom. It can be still called a form of resistance, counter capitalism.

So what do we do with the money we raised? Many fan sites do this type of fundraising to undertake various projects within the fandom. With money we raised from our Chestnut Head J dolls, we purchased 1,000 CDs of Kim Jaejoong's second full length studio album NO.X and sent them to places like radio stations as a promotional effort. Other fan sites donate to the charity in Kim Jaejoong's name. Recent donations include a mobile library with books to the Korean Army's Fist Infantry Division and monetary support to a shelter for single moms and infants.³⁵

³⁵ Check the following website for details: <http://herose.co.kr/>

Patryk Galuszka further defines the new economy of fandom as a condition in which empowered fan communities use the democratizing potential of new social media to communicate and cooperate with artists without the mediation of the traditional recording company (2015). This is in line with Kim Jaejoong's active, direct engagement with his fans via social media such as Twitter and Instagram bypassing his agency. He let the fans know that he checks the fan forum time to time. This indirect, direct communication reinforces fans' sense of empowerment. He made himself an accessible superstar. Fans believe Kim Jaejoong's active efforts to reach out and communicate with his fans made this fandom more special and stronger. They feel like they know Kim Jaejoong's personality better than when he was with SME. Fans witness him trying to make the best out of the circumstances, overcoming tremendous obstacle one by one. His off stage and off screen personae of hard working, doing the best, a humble superstar, filial son, and loving uncle were all revealed via social media. His genuine interest in fans show up when he encounters fans: the motto is "you are the most important person in my life at this moment." He is maturing as a person and an artist in front of the fans. He always tells his fans that he is trying to be the best person he can be not to disappoint the fans. Many fans, both the young and young at heart say, he is their hero and mentor in life. Fans grow with him in their efforts to

emulate him. They are nurturing each other. The economy and the new economy of Kim Jaejoong fandom are the keys to its longevity.

V. Conclusion

Historically, fans and fandom had been studied in two contradicting approaches. Fans and fandom had been either pathology of obsessed and alienated individuals or a problem of outbursts of collective madness. The surge of *acafans* in the West in the last two decades have normalized the fans and fandom practices, producing rich array of academic works that help understanding the modern society. The dramatic ascension of K-pop in international entertainment scene in recent years drew spotlight on the Korean entertainment industry and its fandom. Many scholars inside and outside of Korea and lay people came up with theories and guesses with the winning formula for their success. However, the spotlight had missed the people. Behind the sparkle is long time fans who have been dedicated themselves to promote their stars to the general audiences. In that process, some fandoms became truly transnational in nature, thanks to the internet revolution. This paper looked into one such community, global Kim Jaejoong fandom. This community consists of women of all color, religious background and age.

Still Korean idol group fans are stigmatized by the general public. Under this circumstances Kim Jaejoong fandom serves as a psychological community where the members experience empowerment

in multiple dimensions: sense of belonging through identity building friendship among fans that give them psychological support and cultivate personal growth; fans experience heightened sense of independency, identification and agency; they become politically mobilized to fight social stigma and injustice collectively. The members of fandom also experience their income earning potential rise as well through positive changes in attitude, work ethic and actual improvement of or acquiring new practical skill sets. This community is maintained and operate under a unique economy of fandom based on the gift economy. Kim Jaejoong fandom is not mere community of audience or taste; it is a community where “real” life happens.

The findings in this research may not apply to other K-pop global fandom universally, due to the unique history and the nature of this fandom. And the experiences described here may come across as subjective, and I have painted a too rosy of picture for Kim Jaejoong fandom when Kim Jaejoong fandom has all the dark sides resident in any human community. Still, the empowering effects of women’s fandom in societies where there exist discrepancies in the gender equality in the public sphere and the private sphere can be further validated in more empirical studies of other K-pop fandoms. This can explain why fandoms are multiplying or have become more visible in contemporary societies. Many other fandoms may serve as

psychological communities that provides rewards such as friendship, trust, and shared memories to their members, making the modern life more livable.

REFERENCE

- Aden, Roger. 1999. *Popular Stories and Promised Lands: Fan Cultures and Symbolic Pilgrimages*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press
- Brodie, Richard. 2000. *Virus of the Mind: The New Science of the Meme*, Korean translation by Baek Han-ul. Seoul: Dong-yeon
- Busse, Kristina, Karen Hellekson. 2006. "Work in Progress." *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet: New Essays*. Ed. By Busse K. and Hellekson K. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company
- Busse, Kristina. 2007. Podcasts and the Fan Experience of Disseminated Media commentary
<http://kbusse.wordpress.com/2007/05/01/my-presentation-for-flow-2006> (Accessed: 15 October 2009)
- Caughey, John L. 1978a. "Artificial Social Relations in Modern America." *American Quarterly* 30(1)
- Cristofari, Cecile, Mattieu J. Guitton. 2016. "Aca-fans and Fan Communities: An Operative Framework." *Journal of Consumer Culture* 0(0): 1-19

Duffett, Mark. 2013. *Understanding Fandom: An Introduction to the Study of Media Fan Culture*.

New York: Bloomsbury

Durkheim, Emile. 1964. *The Division of Labor in Society*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press of Glencoe

Ehrenreich, Barbara, Elizabeth Hess, Gloria Jacobs. 1992. "Beatlesmania: Girls Just Want to Have

Fun." In *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media*, edited by Lisa A.

Lewis, 84-106. London: Routledge

Fiske, John. 1992. "The Cultural Economy of Fandom," edited by Lisa A. Lewis,

The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media, 30-49.

London: Routledge

Galuszka, Patryk. 2015. "New Economy of Fandom," *Popular Music and Society*

38(1): 25-43

Gray, Jonathan, Cornel Sandvoss, C. Lee Harrington. 2007. *Fandom: Identities and Communities*

in a Mediated World. New York: New York University Press.

Grossberg, Lawrence. 1992. "Is There a Fan in the House? The Affective Sensibility of Fandom."

In *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media*,
edited by Lisa A. Lewis,

50-67. London: Routledge

Herrmann, Mareike. 2008. "Not One of Those Screaming Girls:
Representing Female Fans in

1990's Germany." *Women's Studies in Communication* 31(1):
79-103

Highfield T., Harrington S., Bruns, A. 2013. "Twitter as a Technology
for Audience and Fandom."

Information, Communication & Society 16(3): 315-339

Jenkins, Henry. 1992. *Textual Poachers: television fans and
participatory culture*. Routledge,

New York

Jenkins, Henry. 2006. *Fans, Bloggers, and Games: Exploring
Participatory Culture*.

New York: New York University Press

Jenkins, Henry. 2006. *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New
Media Collide*.

New York: New York UP

Jensen, Jolie 1992. "Fandom as Pathology: The Consequence of
Characterization."

In *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media*,
edited by Lisa A. Lewis,

9-29. London: Routledge

Jung, Min-woo, Na-young Lee. 2009. "Fandom Managing Stars,
Entertainment Industry

Managing Fandom." *Media, Gender and Culture Korean* 12:
191-281

Seoul: Women's Association for Communication Studies

Kang, Joon-man. 2016. *What does a Fan Girl desire? Yes, I'm a Fan
Girl!* (PPa-su-ni neun

mu-eos-seul Gal-mang-ha-neun-ga? Geu-rae Na Ppa-su-ni da!)

Seoul: Inmul Gwa Sasang

Kim, Hyung-gon. 1998. "An Analysis of Seo Taeji's Strategy of
Success (Seo Taeji eui Seong-

gong Jeon-ryak e daehan Bunseok)." *Journalism and
Communication* 2: 189-212

Kim, Ki-ran, Ki-ho Choi. 2009 *Mass Media Glossary* (2009 Daejung
Munhwa Sajeon).

Seoul: Hyunsil Books

Kim, Su-jeong, Soo-ah Kim. 2015. "From Interpretation Paradigm to
Performance Paradigm:

Tendencies and Issues of Media Fandom Studies.” *Korean Journal of Broadcasting*

29 (4): 33-81

Kim, Young-soon, Hyun-ju Bae. 2013. “A study on the Experience of Adult Female’s

Multicultural Citizenship Acquisition through K-Pop.” *Social Studies Education*

52(2): 29-44

Lather, Patti. 1991. *Getting Smart: Feminist Research and Pedagogy With/In the Postmodern,*

Routledge: New York/London

Lee, Hee-joo. 2016. *Phantom Limb Pain*. Seoul: Munhakdongne

Lee, Min-hee. 2013. *Either a Fandom or Ppa-su-nis*(Fandom i-geo-na Ppasuni geo-na)

Seoul: Alma

Lee, Seung-ah. 2013. JYJ Republic, Seoul: XO Books

Levine, Lawrence W. 1988. *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in*

America, Boston: Harvard University Press.

Lewis, Lisa A. 1992. *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media*, London:

Routledge.

Lie, John. 2013. *K-Pop: Popular Music, Cultural Amnesia, and Economic Innovation in South*

Korea, Oakland, California: University of California Press.

Locke, Lawrence F., Waneen W. Spirduso, Stephen J. Silverman. 2007. *Proposals that Work:*

a Guide for Planning Dissertations and Grant Proposals.

Thousand Oaks, California: Sage

Manning, Jimmie, Tony E. Adams. 2015. "Popular Culture Studies and Autoethnography: An

Essay on Method." *The Popular Culture Studies Journal* 3(1-2): 187-222

Marshall, Catherine, Gretchen B. Rosseman. 2016. *Designing Qualitative Research.*

Thousand Oaks, California: Sage

Meyer, Michaela D.E., Megan H.L. Tucker. 2007. "Textual Poaching and Beyond: Fandom

Communities and Fandoms in the Age of the Internet." *The Review of Communication*

7(1): 103-116

McMillan, David W., Davis M. Chavis. 1986. "Sense of Community: A Definition and Theory."

Journal of Community Psychology 14:6-23, January 1986

McMillan, David W. 1996. "Sense of Community." *Journal of Community Psychology*

24: 315-325

Min, Ji-eun. 2013. "A Study on Sustainable Korean Wave in France: Korean Wave Content as a

Medium Served as a Communication Tool." *Journal of Korean Arts Management* Seoul:

Korean Association of Arts Management 28:61-85

Obst Patricia, Lucy Ziniewicz, Sandy Smith. 2002. "Sense of Community in Science Fiction

Fandom, Part 1: Understanding Sense of Community in an International Community of

Interest." *Journal of Community Psychology* 30(1): 87-103

Park, Eun-kyung. 2003. *god, Stardom and Fandom*. Seoul: Hanul Books

Pearson, Roberta. 2010. "Fandom in the Digital Era," *Popular Communication*,

8(1): 84-95

Rappaport, Julian. 1987. "Terms of Empowerment/Exemplars of Prevention: Toward a Theory

for Community Psychology." *American Journal of Community Psychology*

15(5): 121-148

Shim, Doo-Bo. 2007. "Korean Wave, Korean Drama, and Women's Fandom." *Korean Journal of*

Broadcasting 12(5): 414-422 Seoul

Sohn, Seunghye. "Transnational Online Fandom in the Digital Network Era: An Analysis of the

Interviews with the Members of 2PM Fan Forum Wild2Day."

Media, Gender and

Culture Korean 25: 73-111 Seoul: Women's Association for Communication Studies

Yasumoto, Seiko. 2014. "Popular Culture: Islands of Fandom in East Asia," *The IAFOR Journal*

of Asian Studies 1(1): Winter 2014. Sydney: The University of Sydney Press

Yoon, Sunny. 2012. "New Korean Wave or Post-Colonial Hybridity of Girl Group Singers."

Korean Journal of Broadcasting 26(2): 46-86

GLOSSARY

Acafan is a contraction of academic-fan, a scholar who identifies herself or himself as a fan, a member of both the academic community and the fan community.

Couple-shipping is fans making a fictitious couple out of two same sex group members and write stories or Photoshop pictures to create couple looks. Originated from fanfics and is hugely popular among K-pop fans.

Fancam refers to video filmed by fans during concerts or other events of his or her star that are uploaded onto online platforms such as YouTube or social media sites like Twitter, Face Book, Instagram or Blogs either publically or only to closed network of people.

Fanart in K-pop scene refers an unofficial art work of any medium of a fan subject created by fans that is usually without consent from the fan subject.

Fanfiction or Fanfic writing in K-pop scene refers to a novel written by a fan based on imagined characters awarded to the fan subject.

Fan girl pilgrimage is fans visiting places where the fans' idol or star visited. It can be any place from restaurants, cafes to drama filming locations. Fans order same food or drinks that their idol or star ordered; they also take photos at the same spot with same pose. Some tour companies offer similar special tour packages to overseas fans visiting Korea.

Fan-made Goods These items range from photobooks made of photos taken by fans to keyrings and fabric dolls designed by fans to be sold mainly to fans as collector's items or to be used as promotional items to allure potential fans. These are different from merchandizes produced by the artist's agency for profit. All profits generated from "selling" these goods are usually used to support the artist's promotion: Sending gifts, treats and meals to drama production team and actors involved in the artist's drama, buying CDs and distribute to radio stations and other places or donated to a charity of the artist's choice. These activities are designed to draw media attention and enhance the positive image for the artist.

First Generation Idol Group Korean idol groups debuted in the late '90s and early 2000s such as Shinhwa, S.E.S, G.O.D. and H.O.T. are categorized into Korea's first generation idol group. Aided by the

YouTube's revolution of mass media in 2006 and Hallyu Globalization Project spearheaded by the Korean government in the mid 2000s, the second generation K-pop groups appealed to more global audiences, and recognized as the K-pop groups internationally. TVXQ!, Big Bang, SNSD (Girl's Generation), Super Junior, and 2PM are all classified into this category. Newer K-pop groups such as EXO and BTS belong to the third generation K-pop groups.

Korean Wave or Hallyu (한류) A term coined in China after the Korean drama syndrome hit Asia by storm in the 90s. Now, it encompasses K-pop, Korean made products and all types of Korean cultural product including fashion and life style.

K-pop A term, many believe, first used by Japanese, and later by audience outside of Korea to refer to Korean popular music style began spreading widely in Asia in the late 90s. J, which represented Japanese in J-pop that meant Japanese popular music, with K to represent Korea. This term will be used to in this sense in this paper.

Ppasuni A “contraction of ‘*oppa* (오빠) and *sun* (순이)’ meaning, a little girl who is deeply into an older man. A derogatory term used to refer to avid fans of celebrities or professional athletes. As suggested in

suffix ‘~suni’ this term is targeted to describe a group of teenage girls in particular. Average age of *ppasuni* became younger in general compared to their predecessors, and their behavior tends to be more active and blind toward the subject of their adoration.”

Sasaeng fans are fans who follow their star’s private life beyond the legal or moral limit. They linger around the star’s residence and follow the star to other private spaces and disturb the star. *Sasaeng* fans regularly hire taxies to chase the car their star is riding, placing everyone involved into danger of accidents.

APPENDIX

Survey for Global Kim Jaejoong Fans

Demographic Data

1. Name (Just Initial, full name or nick name):
 2. Age:
 3. Sex:
 4. Country of Residence:
 5. Ethnicity:
 6. Education Completed:
 7. Occupation:
 8. Marital Status:
-

Personal Fan History and Self-assessment

9. When did you become a fan? How long has it been?
10. How did you become a fan?
11. Was Hallyu an influence?
12. When and how did you become an avid, obsessed fan?

13. What type of fan are you in your opinion? Describe, please. (ex: OT5, OT3, Individual fan, etc. multiple answers are accepted.)
14. Why did you decide to seek other fans (online or offline) instead of enjoying your fan life alone?

Fandom Activities and Interactions

15. Where does your fan life (meeting with other fans) happen?
 - I-1.1. Online (Fan Communities, SNS (Twitter, Instagram, KakaoTalk, LINE, FB, etc.):
 - I-1.2. Offline:
- 15-3. What types of activities are you engaged in?
16. How much time do you think spend on fan life per day on average above mentioned activities?
17. Do you meet fans offline?
 - 17-1. If you do, do you meet them on a regular bases or not?
 - 17-2. What type of activities do you engage in?
18. How are your fan friends different from non-fan friends?
19. If you compare the intimacy you feel with your fan friends and non-fan friends, how are they differ in degree and quality?
 - 19-1. What do you think the reasons for differences?
20. Do you hide your identity as a fan at work place or school?

- 20-1. If you do, what are the reasons?
- 20-2. If you don't, what are the reasons?
- 21. Do you hide your identity as a fan to your family?
 - 21-1. If you do, what are the reasons?
 - 21.-2. If you don't, what are the reasons?
- 22. How your fan life be different if you didn't have fan friends?
- 23. If you stop being a fan in the future, what can be a possible reason?
 - 23-1. If you stop being a fan, how your relationship with fan friends will change?
 - 23-2. If you stop being a fan, how do you plan to keep up your friendship with fan friends?
- 24. How would you define the fan community you belong to (ex. Closer than other community, Best friends, Fellow soldiers, Like sisters, etc.)?
- 25. What are some positive things about fan life?
- 26. What are some negative things about fan life?

Fan History

27. Have you been a fan of another celebrity or other field? Are you still fan of that person or field? (ex. Michael Jackson, Soccer, Movie, etc.)?
28. What's unique about this fan life compare to other fan life, if there is?

Life Changing Experiences

29. How did your life change after you became a fan? (List both positive and negative aspects. Ex: I became more sociable, I became more tolerable to other culture, etc.)
30. Are there any new things you began to try after you became a fan (ex: learning new language, going abroad, etc.)?
31. Why do you think you continue your fan life? List the reasons.

초록

이 연구는 케이팝 아이돌 스타, 가수 겸 배우인 김재중의 글로벌 팬덤을 통해 케이팝 팬덤이 어떻게 여성의 초국적 연대와 임파워먼트 기능을 수행하는 지를 살펴본다. 글로벌 김재중 팬덤은 여타 관심 공동체(community of interest) 혹은 수용자 공동체(community of audience)와 일부 공통된 특징을 보인다. 그러나 김재중 글로벌 팬덤은 인터넷 상의 느슨한 관심 공동체(community of interest)나 수동적인 수용자 공동체(community of audience)를 뛰어 넘는, 실생활에 밀접한 영향을 끼치는 풀뿌리 공동체의 성격을 지닌다. 본 연구자는 참여관찰자로서 전세계 35 개국 178 명의 팬을 상대로 한 설문조사와 그룹 및 심층 인터뷰 그리고 본인의 경험을 토대로 이 팬덤이 지닌 독특한 공동체적 특성을 파악하려고 노력했다. 피부색과 문화 태어난 곳 그리고 언어는 가지각색이지만 이 공동체의 전형적인 구성원은 십대를 벗어난 싱글, 전문직 여성이다. 스타를 향한 사랑의 이름으로 모인 이들은 매일 인터넷에서 만나 정보를 교환하고, 일상을 나누며, 희로애락을 같이한다. 또한 느슨한 관심 공동체인 거대 팬덤 우산 아래

소그룹을 이루어 실생활에서도 정기적 혹은 비정기적인 만남을 가진다. 국경과 언어, 문화적 차이를 뛰어넘는 우정과 자매애를 경험하게 해주는 이 공동체 안에서 강한 소속감, 유대감을 느끼며 글로벌 시민으로서의 정체성을 획득하는 등 가치관, 태도 그리고 행동의 실재적 변화를 경험한다. 팬덤 내부에서만 통용되는 반자본주의적 경제 법칙인 선물 경제 개념(gift economy)과 사회적 이슈에 대해 집단행동에 돌입하기도 하는 모습 또한 특이한 사항이다. 그들은 그들이 구축한, 그들만의 초국적 시스터후드의 확장과 유지를 위해 노력하는 가운데 함께 위로하며 격려하면서 개인적 인격적 성장을 계속한다. 이는 인터넷 테크놀로지의 발전으로 가능케 된 전혀 새로운, 흥미로운 초국적 관계 맺음 방식의 출현으로 볼 수 있다.

키워드: 팬덤, 임파워먼트, 연대, 김재중, 케이팝, 한류

Student ID: 2014-25045