



# Fangirling Culture in X: a Virtual Ethnographic Study of Seventeen Boygroup Fans in Makassar City

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## Abstrak

This study explores the cultural practice of fangirling on social media platform X as a space for identity negotiation and communal solidarity in the digital era. Using a digital ethnography approach, data was collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews with fans, and a documentary study of the digital footprints of the informants. The results show that fangirling is not merely a form of passive consumption, but rather a communal cultural activity carried out massively and organized through fictitious kinship structures in cyberspace. This phenomenon manifests itself in the form of digital "work culture," such as the ritual of collectively streaming music and mobilizing votes to increase the symbolic capital of the idol group SEVENTEEN on the global stage. This practice confirms a shift in social interaction patterns, where group loyalty is bound by a commitment to the idol's aesthetics and achievements. Anthropologically, this activity creates a new value system that blurs the boundaries between the private space of fans and the digital public space, while simultaneously strengthening the position of social media platform X as a primary locus in the formation of contemporary popular culture.

**Kata Kunci:** Digital Anthropology, Fangirling Culture, Social Media X

## INTRODUCTION

Popular culture, also known as pop culture, is a form of culture produced by the wider community and typically consumed by the wider community. Popular culture can include music, film, television, books, and other forms of culture. Popular culture is often considered merely a form of entertainment, but it actually has a significant influence on society and culture (Heryanto, 2015). As John Storey stated, "Popular culture is a site of struggle between the 'resistance' of subordinate groups in society and the forces of 'incorporation' operating in the interests of dominant groups in society." This means that popular culture is a site of struggle between subordinate groups in society and forces operating in the interests of more dominant groups in society (Storey, 2008).

The influence of popular culture on adolescent lifestyles is an interesting and relevant topic in the context of adolescent social and health. Today's adolescent lifestyles are influenced by various factors, including the increasingly widespread and easily accessible popular culture through social media and the entertainment industry (Wardhana, 2013). The hedonistic lifestyle that tends to affect adolescents, especially those oriented towards Western culture, is becoming an increasingly popular phenomenon among teenagers. A hedonistic lifestyle is one that involves activities aimed at achieving pleasure in life. They spend more time outside the home, play more, enjoy the hustle and bustle, buy expensive items they like, and always want to be the center of attention. Therefore, it is important to understand the influence of popular culture on adolescent lifestyles and how this can affect adolescent health and development.

Culture is the attitudes, general patterns of behavior, and knowledge that constitute the inherited habits and shared by members of a particular society. Culture influences many aspects of life, such as religion, customs, politics, language, clothing, buildings, and even works of art. Today, foreign cultures are increasingly popular, significantly influencing the customs of Indonesian society (Mawardani & Sudrajat, 2025). The influx of foreign cultures into Indonesia has had both positive and negative impacts. One foreign culture favored by some Indonesians is K-Pop. Competition in the K-Pop world is currently quite intense, with each group striving to achieve its own unique and iconic signature (Trisnadewi & Amaliyah, 2025). Boy groups and girl groups compete to attract fans, both old and new. One boy group currently at the peak of its popularity is Seventeen.

Seventeen is a group that debuted on May 26, 2015. Seventeen has 13 members with three sub-units focused on each member's individual talents. The three sub-units are the Hip Hop Team, responsible for rapping (in the hip hop music genre), the Performance Team, which excels in dance, and the Vocal Team, which showcases unique and highly skilled vocal styles. Seventeen is often referred to as self-producing idols. A group's popularity is influenced by fans who support all forms of work produced/created by their idols. Therefore, fans are integral to an idol group's success (Fidayani et al., 2023).

Fandom is a reality that was previously common in the offline world. Television shows, films, sports clubs, and even music groups can trigger the emergence of a group of people who become devotees (Iskandar & Irawati, 2023). Not only do they collect photocards of their favorite groups, but some also display posters of their idol singers on their

bedroom walls and sometimes imitate their favorite characters, from their speaking style to their clothing. In this digital era, the phenomenon of fandom has increasingly attracted attention, especially the existence of fangirls, who play a crucial role in the dynamics of popular culture.

Fangirl is the term for female fans who idolize someone or something (Fikriyah, 2022). Fans of the boy group Seventeen are known as Carats. The name Carat was formed on February 14, 2016 (CARAT, 2016). Numerous activities are carried out to support their idols, known as fangirling. In the virtual world, the phenomenon of fangirling is even more visible because each individual communicates directly with other fans. Twitter is one of the media used to gain access to their idols. The X accounts used by these fans are called fan accounts. X's interactive nature as a social media platform makes it the primary choice for K-Pop fans to socialize. Several K-Pop fan accounts on X have different characteristics. Some frequently provide information related to idols, translate articles from Korean to English or other languages, share artwork related to idols, create fictional stories, or are simply just regular fan accounts. X was formerly known as Twitter, but on July 22, 2023, Twitter officially rebranded (Rahmadhani et al., 2022).

A common problem among Carats is the frequent cyberwars/fanwars between fandoms, as well as within their own fandoms. This is due to a revenge culture, which is used as a platform for revenge when there's even the slightest opportunity to insult one's favorite idols. However, fangirling isn't just negative; it also has positive aspects (Irmawati et al., 2025).

This culture needs further research because the culture demonstrated by fangirls on Twitter encompasses various aspects, such as fanspeak, selca days, hashtags, and more. This research was conducted on Twitter because SEVENTEEN fans in Makassar use the app quite extensively to communicate with each other and their idols. This research will focus on fan culture, media documentation, and the dynamics of fangirling culture on Twitter. The researcher chose this topic because she was interested in discussing fan culture, which will present several interesting aspects, such as the various activities fangirls engage in in the virtual world, including acting as fanartists, AU (Alternative Universe) writers, information providers, event creators, trending hashtags, streaming music videos, engaging in selca days, translators, impulsive buying, and more. This research was conducted to understand how fan culture and the dynamics of fangirling can influence a fan's identity.

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method with a digital ethnography approach to understand the intricacies of human behavior in cyberspace (Khoirunnisa et al., 2025). The anthropological approach was chosen because its main focus is to dissect cultural practices, value systems, and interaction patterns formed within the fan community on social media X. The researcher does not only act as an outside observer, but seeks to understand the phenomenon from the perspective of the research subject (emic perspective) to capture the meaning behind the streaming and voting activities carried out collectively by Seventeen fans.

Data collection techniques were carried out through participant observation and in-depth interviews (Bungin, 2017). The researcher was actively involved in monitoring timelines, conversations, and the use of hashtags on social media X to record the daily dynamics of the community. Interviews were conducted online with key informants selected through purposive sampling, including individuals active in organizing fan groups. In addition, documentation techniques were used to collect digital archival data in the form of screenshots of communal activities and other supporting documents relevant to the practice of fangirling culture.

Data analysis was carried out inductively through a thematic analysis process that includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Ikbar, 2012). Researchers categorized field findings into communal behavioral patterns to identify how digital social structures operate to mobilize the masses. Data validity was tested using triangulation of sources and methods to ensure that the resulting anthropological interpretation fully and in-depth depicts the social reality of fan communities.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### A Review of Korean Wafe Popular Culture Among Fangirls

Popular culture is culture that is created and consumed en masse and is enjoyed by the majority of the population. According to William (1983: 237), the term "popular" means (1) widely liked by many people, (2) low-level work, (3) work done to please people, and (4) culture created for oneself (Istiqomah & Widiyanto, 2020). Popular culture creates shared tastes among different cultural groups. Popular culture is also referred to as low culture. Generally, popular culture is popular among the working and middle classes, with a preference for sports events, films, sitcoms, pop music, dangdut, and rock music. Popular culture is considered a representation of low culture, meaning that it is residual in nature, accommodating cultural practices that do not meet the requirements of high culture (Pujileksono, 2015).

Popular culture is created by several factors, namely the development of industrialization, capitalism, and high consumerism. Consumer culture is the heart of capitalism, a culture that includes hallucinations, dreams, artificiality, and the packaging of commodities, which are then socially deconstructed through economic communication such as advertising, shows, and other media as a powerful sign of capitalism. Korean culture is rapidly developing and being accepted by the public, giving rise to a phenomenon now known as the Korean Wave (Yashfilhaz, 2023).

The Korean Wave is a term given to the global spread of the Korean Wave across various parts of the world, including Indonesia. Indonesia is one of the countries currently experiencing the Korean Wave phenomenon. This is evidenced by the numerous television stations competing to broadcast or report information about Korea. Currently, many television stations feature Korean-related entertainment programs such as films, dramas, music shows, and so on. However, mass media such as newspapers, tabloids, and magazines also present news and information related to Korea. Likewise, social media has a wider reach (Dinar et al., 2022).

Korean Pop, often referred to as K-Pop, is a genre of popular music originating from South Korea. K-Pop is inseparable from the Korean Wave phenomenon. Pre-modern Korean pop music first emerged in the 1930s due to the influx of Japanese pop music, which influenced the early elements of Korean pop music (Wulandari et al., 2026).

K-pop has introduced boy groups and girl groups that have achieved global popularity with undeniable quality. Korean boy groups refer to all-male South Korean idol groups that dominate the K-pop industry. Korean boy groups have helped spread and promote Korean culture globally through their excellence and popularity. First-generation boy groups from the late 90s and early 2000s, such as H.O.T., Sechs Kies, Shinhwa, and g.o.d., are considered the first idol groups to achieve success in Korea and through their participation in the first Hallyu Wave.

Fandom is a reality that was previously mostly found in the offline world, but nowadays it can also be found online. Television shows, films in theaters, sports clubs, and even music group fans can trigger the emergence of groups of people as "devotees," and this worship can ultimately unite them and form virtual communities. Fandom can be defined as a group of people connected by a shared interest in an object. Fandom is essentially comprised of individuals who share a common passion for an idol. In this case, K-pop fandoms consist of various types, such as the Carat fandom, which loves Seventeen (Juwita & Nurnisya, 2023).

The term "fangirl" refers to someone who enthusiastically loves something, such as music, books, sports teams, or celebrities. Fans are called fangirls (female fans) when they join a fan community for a particular boy group. Urban Dictionary defines a fangirl as a female fan who idolizes someone or something, sometimes to the point of obsession. Fangirls typically idolize singers in boy or girl groups, celebrities, actors/actresses, film directors, and others (Xiao, 2025).

This definition gives rise to the practice of fangirling. Fangirling is a term for someone who idolizes their idol and experiences a unique feeling of joy or happiness when engaging in activities or activities, particularly the feeling of idolization. Fangirling is also defined as socializing with friends from the same fandom, either through social media or offline, to exchange information about their idol. One of the most widely used platforms for fangirls to exchange information is Twitter (Mulyana & Wahyuningroem, 2025).

### Teenagers in the Circle of Popular Culture

The identity dilemma in popular culture occurs when popularity threatens the strengthening of national identity in urban communities, particularly among adolescents. Popular culture, which encompasses artifacts such as food, music, television programs, architecture, social interactions, and advertising, is political in nature and influences hedonistic, consumerist, and pragmatic attitudes in urban communities. Pop culture itself is easily developed by urban communities due to easy access to popular media, given today's rapidly evolving technology. According to the WHO, early adolescence is defined as the age range of 10-11 years, a period during which individuals begin to search for their identity.

Several issues related to the identity dilemma in popular culture include the potential for the erasure of traditional societal frames of reference, such as ethnicity, religion, tribe, culture, and the nation's values or philosophy. Pancasila is also one such frame of reference used by Indonesian society.

Teenagers today are increasingly following things that are considered viral or trendy, leading them to gradually abandon their traditional frames of reference, such as clothing. They now prefer trendy attire to clothing that covers the intimate parts of the body. Furthermore, popular culture also influences the national identity of urban communities. Therefore, popular culture can displace traditional frames of reference and replace them with more trivial, pragmatic, and commercial identities.

Mass media supports popular culture, such as anime and fashion, which then becomes a way for teenagers to find their identity and identity. Continuous consumption of popular culture shapes new cultural influences in society, thus triggering the emergence of popular culture. One example is wibu. Wibu is a term commonly used to describe someone who is very fond of Japanese culture. They typically dress according to their favorite characters and often even imitate their lifestyles and speech patterns.

Competing identities and the loss of collective identity have led to the increasing fragmentation of personal identity, reflecting the identity dilemma within the mainstream of popular culture. In addressing the identity dilemma within the mainstream of popular culture, it is important to understand how popular culture influences national identity and how society adapts to global trends. There is a gradual process that is causing the loss of traditional frames of reference in adolescents. Traditional frames of reference, such as religion, the environment, and the surrounding community, are considered to be in decline and being eroded by increasingly modern developments.

The threat of popular culture to youth identity cannot be ignored, as it can disrupt the identity stability of urban communities. One effort that can be made is to internalize local culture (local wisdom), so that urban communities will indirectly adopt the culture around them. Furthermore, filtering foreign cultures can be done so that urban communities can choose cultures that align with their local culture and do not eliminate or diminish existing ones.

In recent years, South Korean popular culture, commonly known as K-Pop, has become an integral part of the lives of many teenagers in Indonesia. Its energetic music, immersive choreography, and charismatic idol performances have made K-Pop a global trend that is widely loved by young people and even adults. More than just entertainment, K-Pop has now become a lifestyle and even influences the way teenagers think, dress, and interact with their surroundings.

One of the most appealing aspects of K-Pop is its ability to foster enthusiasm and creativity among teenagers. Many young people are motivated to dance, sing, or even create creative content on social media after watching idols perform. The discipline and hard work of K-Pop artists are often used as role models by fans. They learn that success doesn't just happen, but rather results from consistent practice and effort. K-Pop also introduces many new aspects of South Korean culture. From music and language to food, all elements of Korean culture are now more widely known and sought after. Many teenagers have begun learning Korean because they want to understand the lyrics directly. This certainly broadens their horizons and broadens their perspective on the outside world.

Furthermore, K-Pop often conveys positive messages through its lyrics. Messages such as self-love, daring to dream, and remaining strong in the face of adversity often serve as motivation for teenagers searching for their identity. In this sense, K-Pop is not only entertainment, but also a source of inspiration and encouragement.

However, K-Pop also has a negative side that needs to be considered. One of the most common impacts is excessive fanaticism. Some fans are willing to spend a lot of time and money supporting their idols. They buy albums, attend concerts, and even follow their idols' news daily. If left unchecked, this habit can cause teenagers to lose focus on school and their social lives.

Furthermore, the beauty standards projected by idols often create pressure. Ideal bodies, perfect faces, and flawless appearances are difficult benchmarks to achieve. As a result, some teenagers feel insecure and strive to emulate these standards, even though everyone has their own unique qualities and strengths. Furthermore, the presence of social media has also amplified the influence of K-Pop. Competition between fan groups sometimes leads to arguments and mutual teasing. This phenomenon demonstrates that if admiration is not balanced with maturity, the positive influence of K-Pop can turn into something detrimental.

K-Pop does have a strong and difficult-to-avoid appeal, especially for teenagers who are in the process of discovering their identity. This phenomenon brings many benefits, such as fostering enthusiasm, creativity, and interest in foreign cultures. However, on the other hand, K-Pop can also have negative impacts if followed unchecked. Therefore, teenagers need to learn to enjoy K-Pop wisely. Admiring idols is fine, but don't neglect your own responsibilities, education, and cultural values. With a balanced approach, K-Pop can be both enjoyable entertainment and a learning tool that enriches the insights and character of Indonesia's young generation.

### **The Cultural Practice of Fangirling in the World of X**

Popular culture is a culture of production and consumption related to media. Fandom on social media platforms, as a new zone, has been shown to have impacted the formation of new subcultures distinct from previous fan groups. With the emergence of this new zone, young people have a significant opportunity to create new spaces mediated by the internet to accommodate their activities. Not only do they have the opportunity to expand their creativity and utilize digital spaces for social interaction among fans, but they can also design and develop new subcultures by developing their identity expressions.

Young people who join online fandoms are not simply passive fans. Supported by the development of media, young people have greater freedom to choose their favorite popular culture, stay up-to-date with the latest news, and foster interactivity with fellow fans through the virtual world.

K-pop fandom is known as a global popular culture, widely enjoyed by many people around the world, forming fandom communities filled with Hallyu enthusiasts spread across the globe. From a media perspective, K-pop's popularity and consumption by its fans are due to the process of globalization. Globalization has brought K-pop culture through content like Korean dramas, Korean music, dance, and even fashion and cosmetics. Consequently, K-pop culture has spread and developed among fans, generally favored by female fans known as fangirls.

Fangirling is a term used to describe the activity of showing admiration, enthusiasm, or joy for an idol or something they like, such as an artist, musician, actor, or fictional character ((The Meaning of Fangirling and Other Slang Terms in Pop Culture in Indonesia, 2022) accessed on February 14, 2025 at 03:03 WITA). Fangirls have various reasons when they decide to become a K-Pop fan, for example because they admire the performance, talent, lifestyle, and not a few consider their idols to be a motivation to keep going and not give up in achieving their dreams ((Putri, 2023) accessed on February 16, 2025 at 00:06 WITA). The most common thing done when fangirling in X is interacting with fellow fandom fans, especially discourse about Seventeen.

Seventeen fans are known as the CARAT fandom. Carat currently has numerous online communities for interacting and exchanging information on platform X, one of which is the autobase @caratstalk, which accommodates all carats in Indonesia. However, this autobase account will send tweets anonymously. Each city/region has its own fanbase account, for example, the @caratmakassar fanbase account for carats domiciled in Makassar. This account provides a platform for Makassar carats to share information about events, both online and offline. However, what is currently evident in the field is that Makassar carats still rely more on their own accounts to interact with fellow Seventeen fans, using the keyword "Carat Makassar."

During the interviews, the first question asked by the researcher was how the informants ultimately chose to join the Carat fandom, and the informants gave a variety of answers to the researcher. One of the interviews conducted by

researchers online via Twitter Direct Message on January 15-16 2025 at 19.53 WITA with a source named Asmi (27 years old) said that:

I first got to know Seventeen in 2017, when the song Don't Wanna Cry was released. Since I first heard the song Don't Wanna Cry, I immediately liked the song. However, because at that time it was still the beginning of the college semester, so I was busy with student activity, so I didn't really follow Seventeen's schedule. 2017-2019 could be said to be just a casual listener and occasionally watched Seventeen's variety content. In 2020, I was busy with KKN (Community Service Program) and my thesis, so I was very focused on my studies. I started following Seventeen intensively again in March 2022, when the Covid-19 case was very alarming and students were on leave and studying from home. Started to dig back and watch Seventeen content, starting from the first episode of Going Seventeen in 2019 to the last episode in 2022. At that time, Seventeen was still hyped, because they didn't have any fellow fandom friends around them, until the release of Seventeen Power Of Love Documentary, that day I met my carat friends who turned out to be very exciting. From there, every time I had free time I always tried to join the Makassar carat event."

Based on the interview results, the informant's reason for joining the Carat fandom was because they felt a connection with Seventeen's music. In other words, what captivates fans isn't just their visuals, but also their music. Furthermore, the researcher interviewed Emi (21), a member of the Carat Makassar fanbase who is active in various event preparations. This interview was conducted via Twitter Direct Message on January 15, 2025, at 7:00 PM.

"Initially, I always listened to their title track every time Seventeen made a comeback, so I was just a casual listener. However, when the variety show Unexpected Q aired, I decided to watch it, and it turned out Seungkwon was a really funny guy, and Hoshi was a guest on the show. I started to dig deeper and learn more about SEVENTEEN. Then there was the time Hoshi was one of the judges on a Dancing High competition. At that point, I was already very fond of Hoshi, but I decided to join the fandom after watching Hoshi's performance of "SHHH" on KBS GAYO."

The interview above shows that the interviewee initially was just a casual listener of Seventeen's music. He then decided to join the Carat fandom because of Hoshi's dance skills on Unexpected Q and his "SHHH" stage on KBS Gayo. KBS Gayo Daechukje is an annual concert held by Korean television stations. In an interview conducted by the researcher with a source named Liya (25 years old) via Direct Message on January 15, 2025, the source explained the things she often does when fangirling on Twitter, as follows:

I follow the hype of the groups I like of course, especially my bias Jeonghan, then share useful things with my friends in the same fandom, and often also vent my frustrations if someone spreads bad things about the groups I like. I also often read AU (Alternate Universe) works created by authors in the same fandom as me and always post photos after every event or event I attend.

Based on the interview, some of the most common things done during fangirling include participating in the timelines of the group they follow. Generally, a group has two or more members to be considered an idol group. Seventeen itself has 13 members. Typically, a fangirl has one favorite person, often referred to as a bias. A bias is one or more members that the fan likes the most. Every fangirl has their own bias, for example, interviewee Liya stated that her bias is a member named Jeonghan.

In the interview, the interviewee also mentioned frequently reading AU, an acronym for Alternate Universe. Alternate Universe is a media archive (Media Document) in the world of fangirling, also formerly known as Fan Fiction. Alternate Universe, or Fan Fiction, is a popular fictional story that is quite popular among K-pop fans. The AUs (automotive characters) that are quite common in X nowadays are no longer just narrative, but many are in the form of images containing conversations between characters whose visuals are claimed to be idols' faces. SEVENTEEN also has many interesting AUs to read on the X platform, but as readers, we must be wise in choosing which narratives to read, because on Twitter/X platforms, the content that appears on the timeline cannot be automatically filtered. Furthermore, in an interview conducted on January 15, 2025, Dhita (24 years old) said:

A lot. I find out what people are gossiping about, because I'm a curious person about the issues netizens are arguing about. Sometimes I also remind my fandom friends to stream and vote on designated apps. I often do JBBB with mutual friends, play games, quote retweet, read Alternate Universe, and do many other things."

Based on the interview above, X's social media activities range from reading Alternate Universe, reminding people to stream and vote for their idol's music to enter music charts like MelonChart, Billboard, Spotify, and others, as well as winning first place on weekly music shows like Inkigayo, MusicBank, and Mcountdown. Meanwhile, "jbbj" itself refers to replying to tweets in the comments section. Then, a subsequent interview with Icha (24 years old) on January 17, 2025, at 8:00 PM WITA via Direct Message on Twitter stated that:

I hope fanwars don't become a culture, but I think it's difficult because they're so ingrained in the K-pop scene. Nowadays, even the smallest thing becomes a big deal. Even fanwars within fandoms are very common, let alone fanwars between fandoms. Things that shouldn't be a problem are still used as fodder for fanwars by fans who feel their idols are better. Such things shouldn't be addressed, but if they aren't addressed, things only get worse. So, I think fanwars are inseparable from the K-pop scene.

Based on the interview results, the source explained that fanwars are inseparable from the K-pop scene. It can be concluded that these fanwars are typically triggered by irresponsible fans who comment through anonymous accounts. Over time, the instigating anonymous accounts disappear or make their accounts private, making them inaccessible, without providing clarification or an apology. Fanwars are a form of fanaticism that grows out of excessive enthusiasm for one's idol (Pohan & Gustiana, 2023). In a subsequent interview with Rara (26 years old), an additional source, on July 7, 2025, at 6:30 PM WITA (Central Indonesian Time) via Direct Message on Twitter, the source stated:

I think fanwars are unimportant and unreasonable. Why should they be fanwarred over something that's not worth making a fuss about? And I don't think they can be considered a culture, because we can't consider negative things as culture.

Based on the interview results, the researcher concluded that not all fans agree that fanwars are a culture, as they are considered negative and irresponsible. In a subsequent interview with Dhita (24) via Direct Message on Twitter on January 17, 2025, at 9:00 PM WITA, the interviewee stated:

In my opinion, what constitutes culture is streaming and voting. Back during the Carat era, everyone streamed and voted together to try to raise Seventeen's profile, but now, it could be said that the unity has decreased. Mutual respect in idolizing is also part of the culture, but now, as you can see on the timeline, there's a lack of mutual respect.

Based on the interview results above, the informant stated that what can be said as a culture in fangirling is streaming music works and voting to raise the name of Seventeen. The compactness of carat in streaming and voting is very clear in the debut era to An Ode, compared to the current new eras. Mutual respect in the way of liking idols is also included in the culture, because if we do not respect each other it will deviate from the meaning of fangirling itself and can be seen currently on the timeline quite a lot of hate speech tweets (see figure 4.1) that do not respect the way someone idolizes their idol, they feel that there is a special standard for liking the idol, but in fact everyone has their own way of fangirling.

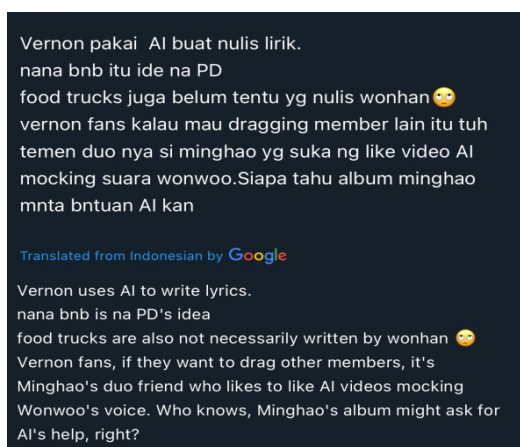


Figure 4. Example of Hate Speech Triggering Fanwar

The informants Asmi, Liya, Anya, and Ochi stated that they disagreed with the fanwar being called a culture, because fanwar is a very negative thing in the kpop sphere. Fanwar occurs because there are irresponsible people who express opinions through anonymous accounts using the visuals/identities of kpop idols, thus causing a divide between fandoms, even within their own fandom. The informant Dhita also said that this fanwar really happened because of something that was initially only a small problem and when responded to it would spread everywhere, to the point of invading privacy or doxxing someone's identity, both idols and their fans. Fanwar in the perspective of anthropology as a new/digital cultural space, fanwar is likened to a war between tribes in society, but with a different battlefield, namely social media, and the rights being fought over are not territory but symbols of honor and fandom status.

The communal practices of Seventeen fans on X can be analyzed through Victor Turner's concept of "Communitas," which refers to an intense community spirit and a feeling of social equality and togetherness. In the digital landscape of X, individual identities often merge into a collective "Carat" (Seventeen's fandom name) identity. This bond is forged through shared hardships and triumphs during streaming projects or voting seasons. This

phenomenon transcends geographical boundaries, creating a liminal space where fans exist outside their everyday social hierarchies, united solely by their devotion to the idol.

From the perspective of Marcel Mauss's "The Gift," the acts of streaming and voting can be viewed as a form of non-material exchange that sustains the social fabric of the fandom. While there is no direct monetary reward, fans "give" their time, energy, and digital footprints to the idol. In return, they receive a sense of belonging and the collective pride of the idol's success. This reciprocity creates a moral obligation within the group to participate, where those who contribute more "labor" often gain higher social prestige or symbolic capital within the fandom's internal hierarchy.

The organized nature of these activities reflects what anthropologists call "Digital Tribalism." The fans on X do not act as unorganized individuals; they operate through sophisticated social structures with specific roles, such as "fanbases" acting as tribal leaders who coordinate mass movements. The ritualization of music streaming—often done with specific rules and schedules—mimics traditional cultural rituals intended to ensure the "prosperity" of the tribe (in this case, the idol's career). This demonstrates how traditional human instincts for tribal organization are repurposed in a high-tech environment.

Furthermore, the transition of *fangirling* into a massive, group-oriented activity highlights a shift in consumption patterns from passive consumption to "prosumption" (producing while consuming). Fans are no longer just audiences; they are active cultural agents who participate in the "social life" of the musical product. By manipulating algorithms through collective action, they exercise "agency" against global industry standards. This struggle for visibility on X is a modern manifestation of how subcultures negotiate power within dominant global media structures.

Lastly, using a Digital Ethnography lens, we see that the "culture" of *fangirling* on X is a lived experience that blurs the line between the virtual and the real. The emotions, conflicts, and celebrations experienced online have tangible effects on the fans' daily lives and well-being. This research suggests that the digital space is not a "separate" world but a vital extension of human sociality. The massive participation in voting and streaming is a testament to how digital tools have allowed human beings to reinvent the concept of "kinship" and "community" in the 21st century.

## CONCLUSION

his research concludes that *fangirling* practices on X (formerly Twitter) function as a complex digital ecosystem that redefines contemporary communal behavior. Far from being a mere hobby, these activities represent a form of "digital labor" and cultural ritual, where fans of Seventeen transform the platform into a space for collective mobilization. The systematic practices of music streaming and voting serve as cultural markers that strengthen group solidarity and establish a shared sense of purpose. Anthropologically, this phenomenon illustrates how digital spaces facilitate the creation of a "global village" where fans negotiate their identities and exercise their agency to elevate their idols' symbolic status within the global pop culture hierarchy.

Furthermore, the study reveals that the social structure of these fan communities is built upon high levels of cooperation and an informal hierarchy that mimics traditional kinship. This communalism is driven by a unified goal, creating a new form of digital folklore and social norms that govern how individuals interact within the group. Ultimately, the findings suggest that the culture of *fangirling* on social media is a manifestation of modern sociality, where technology and human emotion intersect to form resilient digital subcultures. This research highlights the shift from individual consumption to mass participation, positioning digital platforms as the primary site for the evolution of social rituals in the 21st century.

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