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Public Interpretation of Celebrity Hiatuses: Comparing Manon and Sophia of KATSEYE

Khansa Syifa Wibowo[1*], Maulina Larasati Putri[2], M. Fikri Akbar[3], Sandy Allifiansyah[4]

[1,2,3,4] Communication Sciences, Universitas Negeri Jakarta
[1*]khansa.syifa.wibowo@mhs.unj.ac.id, [2]maulinalarasati@unj.ac.id, [3]m.fikri@unj.ac.id, [4]sandyallifiansyah@unj.ac.id

Abstract

This study examines public interpretations of Manon Bannerman's and Sophia Laforteza's hiatuses from KATSEYE in 2026, focusing on how differences in official communication influence audience responses. As social media enables audiences to interpret and discuss celebrity absences, variations in information availability may shape how such events are understood. This research employs a qualitative comparative case study design using qualitative content analysis. The data consist of three official announcements issued by HYBE x Geffen and seven publicly accessible posts on X, comprising four posts concerning Manon and three concerning Sophia. The analysis is guided by Uncertainty Reduction Theory and Entman's Framing Theory. The findings indicate that differences in the specificity and continuity of official communication provide distinct contexts for audience interpretation. Responses concerning Manon focus on agency accountability, public acknowledgment, perceived unequal treatment, and uncertainty about her group status. Meanwhile, responses concerning Sophia address perceived inconsistencies, fandom conflict, and organizational responsibility toward audiences. These findings demonstrate how audiences may question and reframe official narratives when interpreting celebrity hiatuses.

Keywords: Celebrity Hiatus, Audience Interpretation, Social Media, Uncertainty Reduction Theory, Framing Theory

INTRODUCTION

The development of social media has transformed how the public accesses, distributes, and interprets information about public figures. Information about celebrities, which was once primarily disseminated through conventional media outlets, can now circulate directly through social media platforms, allowing audiences to participate in discussions and construct narratives surrounding their personal and professional lives (Akbar et al., 2026). One phenomenon that deserves attention is the decision of celebrities to temporarily withdraw from their professional activities, commonly referred to as a hiatus. Such decisions do not merely communicate an individual's absence from public appearances or professional commitments but may also generate various interpretations among audiences, particularly when the information provided is insufficient to explain the circumstances surrounding the absence. In these situations, information gaps may encourage audiences to seek additional explanations, compare different sources, and develop their own interpretations based on the information available in digital spaces.

This phenomenon can be observed through the experiences of two members of the global girl group KATSEYE, Manon Bannerman and Sophia Laforteza, who both took temporary breaks from group activities in 2026. On February 20, 2026, HYBE x Geffen announced that Manon would be taking a temporary hiatus to focus on her health and well-being. The announcement emphasized that the decision followed open and thoughtful conversations, while also stating that KATSEYE would continue its scheduled activities during her absence. However, the announcement did not specify the duration of her hiatus or provide a confirmed timeline for her return (HYBE x Geffen, 2026a). Several months later, in August 2026, Sophia announced a break from group activities to prioritize her mental health and well-being. The management subsequently explained that, following consultations with medical professionals, Sophia had been advised to take extended rest and receive ongoing care. The company also stated that her condition would be reassessed in September 2026 (HYBE x Geffen, 2026b). In October 2026, a further announcement confirmed that Sophia was expected to resume group activities during the first week of January 2027 (HYBE x Geffen, 2026c).

These two events demonstrate differences in the availability and specificity of information communicated to the public. While Manon's announcement provided a general explanation concerning her health and well-being, Sophia's announcement included additional information regarding medical recommendations, extended rest, and a reassessment timeline. Such differences are relevant because the information available to audiences may influence how they understand and interpret an event. When official statements do not sufficiently address public questions, social media may become an alternative space for information-seeking, discussion, speculation, and the construction of competing narratives. Consequently, public responses are not necessarily determined by official announcements alone but may also be shaped by how audiences process available information, encounter alternative explanations, and interpret narratives circulating within digital communities.

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Previous studies have examined the relationship between celebrities, social media, and audience responses through various theoretical perspectives. Hoffner and Bond (2022) examined parasocial relationships in the context of social media and their relationship with audience well-being. Their review highlighted how parasocial relationships may provide emotional connections and support while also producing potentially adverse effects on individuals. He and Sun (2022), through their qualitative study of the psychological adaptation process of renouncing fanship, identified how emotional attachment, cognitive dissonance, and social influences shape audiences' responses to changes in their relationships with public figures. Meanwhile, Spilioti and Giaxoglou (2024) investigated celebrity discourse surrounding decisions to take breaks from social media. Their findings identified mental health and well-being, public-private boundaries, and social justice as prominent discourses used to explain decisions to temporarily withdraw from online sharing. These studies provide relevant insights into the relationship between celebrity communication, audience attachment, and public discourse surrounding personal well-being.

Other studies have highlighted the role of information circulation and framing in shaping public interpretations within digital environments. Zhao and Wang (2023) examined networked framing through an analysis of government media and public discourse on Weibo. Their findings demonstrated that audiences can challenge institutional frames and construct alternative interpretations through social media interactions. Similarly, Lu and Qiu (2024) investigated how cognitive and emotional framing influences users' information dissemination behavior on Weibo, demonstrating the relevance of message framing in shaping online engagement. Trifiro et al. (2023) examined framing strategies in Facebook content and their relationship with audience engagement, identifying the influence of human-interest framing on user engagement. Furthermore, Handarkho et al. (2021) explored online uncertainty management and found that individuals use social media and other digital sources to obtain information, manage uncertainty, and support their decision-making processes. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that social media functions not only as a channel for information distribution but also as an environment in which audiences seek, evaluate, and construct meaning from available information.

Despite these contributions, there remains an opportunity to examine how differences in information availability and public framing contribute to audience interpretations of comparable events involving individuals within the same entertainment group. Previous research has explored celebrity hiatus discourse, parasocial relationships, online information-seeking behavior, and networked framing as separate areas of investigation. However, comparatively limited attention has been directed toward examining how audiences interpret two similar events involving members of the same group, particularly when the information provided by management differs in its level of specificity and subsequent updates. This study addresses this research gap by comparing public interpretations of Manon and Sophia's hiatuses from KATSEYE, focusing on information uncertainty and the development of public narratives in digital discussions.

This study employs Uncertainty Reduction Theory, introduced by Berger and Calabrese (1975), and Framing Theory, developed by Entman (1993), as its theoretical foundations. Uncertainty Reduction Theory is used to examine how audiences respond to incomplete information through information-seeking and evaluation processes when attempting to understand unfamiliar or uncertain situations. Although originally developed to explain uncertainty in initial interpersonal interactions, its concepts provide a potential analytical perspective for examining how audiences seek information about public figures through mediated communication. Meanwhile, Framing Theory is employed to analyze how events are presented, interpreted, evaluated, and discussed through particular perspectives. Entman's framing functions, which include problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation, provide an analytical framework for examining the construction of narratives surrounding the two hiatuses. Combining these perspectives allows the study to explore the relationship between information availability, audience information-seeking behavior, and the formation of public interpretations in digital discourse.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze differences in public interpretations of Manon and Sophia's hiatuses from KATSEYE by examining information availability and the framing of narratives circulating on social media. Specifically, it seeks to understand how uncertainty encourages audiences to seek and process information and how different interpretative frames emerge and develop through digital discussions. This research is expected to contribute to communication studies, particularly in the areas of celebrity communication, information-seeking behavior, and the construction of meaning within digital public discourse.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative comparative case study design using qualitative content analysis to examine official communication and audience interpretations surrounding the hiatuses of Manon Bannerman and Sophia Laforteza of KATSEYE. The primary data consist of three official announcements issued by HYBE x Geffen concerning the two members' absences, along with seven publicly accessible English-language posts on X (formerly Twitter). The selected audience posts comprise four posts concerning Manon and three concerning Sophia, including original posts and other publicly available content relevant to the discussion of their respective hiatuses. Purposive sampling was used to select posts based on their relevance to audience interpretations, particularly expressions of uncertainty, criticism of organizational communication, public perception, fandom dynamics, and expectations toward the agency. Rather than applying a fixed observation period following each announcement, the selection focused on posts that directly addressed the circumstances and public communication surrounding the two members' absences.

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The analysis was guided by Uncertainty Reduction Theory (Berger & Calabrese, 1975) and Entman's Framing Theory (1993). Uncertainty Reduction Theory was used to examine how selected users responded to incomplete information, including expressions of uncertainty, attempts to interpret available information, and questions concerning the members' circumstances and group status. Framing Theory was applied to identify how users constructed interpretations through four functions: problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation (Limbong et al., 2026). The official announcements were first examined comparatively in terms of their explanations, level of detail, and subsequent updates. The selected X posts were then categorized according to the member discussed and analyzed using the two theoretical perspectives, while allowing additional themes to emerge from the data. The findings were subsequently compared to identify differences in official communication and audience interpretations. Only publicly accessible content was included, and claims or opinions expressed in audience posts were treated as individual interpretations rather than verified information about the members' circumstances. Usernames appearing in the figures were retained to identify the original public posts presented in the analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The comparison of HYBE x Geffen's official announcements and fan discussions on X reveals differences between the information communicated by the agency and the interpretations subsequently expressed by audiences. While the agency presents the members' absences as health-related decisions that require understanding and support, selected audience responses demonstrate that these explanations may also become subjects of public scrutiny. The discussions surrounding Manon and Sophia raise different concerns, ranging from the agency's communication practices and the members' public activities to fandom conflict and organizational responsibility. The analysis therefore considers both the agency's construction of the hiatus announcements and the ways selected users interpret the information made available to them.

Manon's temporary hiatus was announced through an official notice published on February 21, 2026. The agency explained that the decision followed open and thoughtful conversations and that Manon would temporarily step away from group activities to focus on her health and well-being. The announcement also emphasized the agency's support for her decision and reassured fans that KATSEYE would continue its scheduled activities. However, the statement did not provide further details about the circumstances of her absence, its expected duration, or a possible return date. Its closing statement, expressing hope that the group would reunite when the time was right, acknowledged the possibility of her return without establishing a specific timeline.

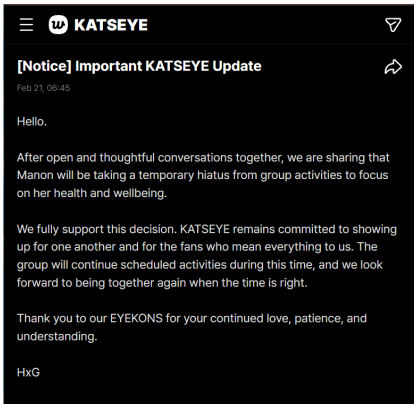
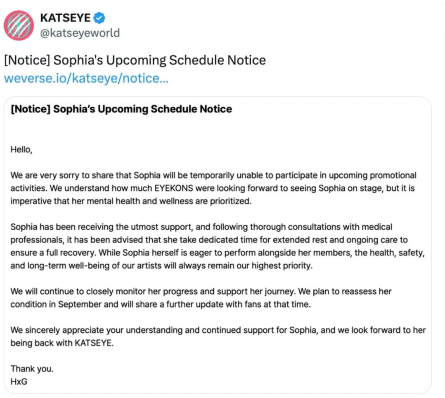


Figure 1. Official announcement of Manon's temporary hiatus from KATSEYE activities, February 21, 2026

A different level of detail can be observed in Sophia's initial hiatus announcement. The agency explained that she would temporarily be unable to participate in upcoming promotional activities, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing her mental health and well-being. Unlike Manon's announcement, Sophia's statement referred to consultations with medical professionals and explained that extended rest and ongoing care had been recommended to support her recovery. It also stated that her condition would be reassessed in September, with a further update to be shared with fans. Although the announcement did not disclose specific medical information or establish an exact return date, it provided a clearer outline of the circumstances surrounding her absence and the steps being taken during that period.

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KATSEYE
@katseyeworld

[Notice] Sophia's Upcoming Schedule Notice
weverse.io/katseye/notice...

[Notice] Sophia's Upcoming Schedule Notice

Hello,

We are very sorry to share that Sophia will be temporarily unable to participate in upcoming promotional activities. We understand how much EYEKONS were looking forward to seeing Sophia on stage, but it is imperative that her mental health and wellness are prioritized.

Sophia has been receiving the utmost support, and following thorough consultations with medical professionals, it has been advised that she take dedicated time for extended rest and ongoing care to ensure a full recovery. While Sophia herself is eager to perform alongside her members, the health, safety, and long-term well-being of our artists will always remain our highest priority.

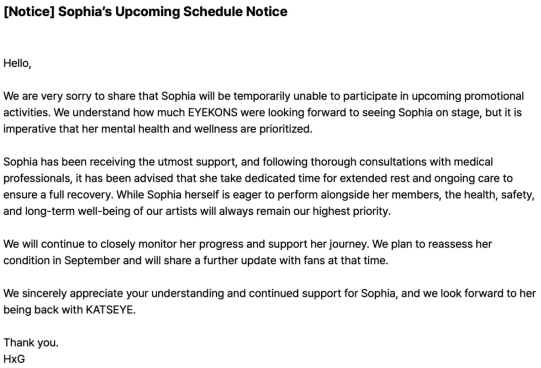
We will continue to closely monitor her progress and support her journey. We plan to reassess her condition in September and will share a further update with fans at that time.

We sincerely appreciate your understanding and continued support for Sophia, and we look forward to her being back with KATSEYE.

Thank you.
HxG

Figure 2. Official announcement regarding Sophia's temporary absence from promotional activities

The communication surrounding Sophia's hiatus developed further through a subsequent schedule announcement in October 2026. HYBE x Geffen confirmed that she was expected to resume group activities with KATSEYE in the first week of January 2027. The statement also clarified that she would not participate in the North American leg of THE WILDWORLD TOUR or the remaining promotional activities scheduled for 2026. This announcement provided a more definite timeline than the initial statement, transforming the earlier expectation of a future update into a specific indication of when audiences could anticipate her return. In comparison, the official materials examined for Manon did not contain an equivalent confirmation of her return schedule. Consequently, the two cases differ not only in the level of detail provided in their initial announcements but also in the availability of subsequent information concerning their respective returns.


[Notice] Sophia's Upcoming Schedule Notice

Hello,

We are very sorry to share that Sophia will be temporarily unable to participate in upcoming promotional activities. We understand how much EYEKONS were looking forward to seeing Sophia on stage, but it is imperative that her mental health and wellness are prioritized.

Sophia has been receiving the utmost support, and following thorough consultations with medical professionals, it has been advised that she take dedicated time for extended rest and ongoing care to ensure a full recovery. While Sophia herself is eager to perform alongside her members, the health, safety, and long-term well-being of our artists will always remain our highest priority.

We will continue to closely monitor her progress and support her journey. We plan to reassess her condition in September and will share a further update with fans at that time.

We sincerely appreciate your understanding and continued support for Sophia, and we look forward to her being back with KATSEYE.

Thank you.
HxG

Figure 3. Official announcement regarding Sophia's anticipated return to KATSEYE activities in January 2027

The differences between the two announcements can be further identified by examining the information provided by the agency at different stages of each member's hiatus. While both announcements emphasize health and well-being as the primary reasons for their respective absences, they differ in the level of detail and the availability of subsequent updates. The following table summarizes these differences in terms of the initial explanations, return information, and overall communication provided by HYBE x Geffen.

Table 1. Comparison of Official Communication Regarding Manon and Sophia's Hiatuses

Analytical Aspect	Manon	Sophia
Initial announcement	General reference to health and well-being	Explicit reference to mental health, medical consultation, and extended rest
Return information	No specific return timeline	September reassessment initially; January 2027 return later confirmed
Official communication	Emphasizes support and group continuity	Emphasizes health, ongoing care, and eventual return

The comparison highlights a difference in how the agency communicated the circumstances and expected duration of each member's absence. While Sophia's announcements provided additional context and a subsequent return timeline, the available announcement concerning Manon offered a more general explanation without a confirmed schedule

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for her return. These differences form an important context for examining how some fans interpreted the communication surrounding Manon's hiatus, particularly in relation to the agency's perceived responsibilities toward the member.



Figure 4. Fan criticism by @YakupF34477 concerning the agency's perceived treatment of Manon

A similar concern appears in another post that questions the agency's apparent reluctance to address Manon's situation directly. The user refers to the absence of public acknowledgment during events such as Coachella and the ARAMAs, arguing that the agency should communicate more honestly with fans rather than allowing group activities to continue as though nothing has changed. This reaction is significant because it suggests that, for some fans, the issue extends beyond the lack of a return date. Their concern also involves the perceived absence of recognition of Manon's continued connection to the group. The expectation expressed in the post is not necessarily for the agency to disclose private health information, but rather to provide some form of acknowledgment or clarification regarding her status.



Figure 5. Fan criticism by @outrosza questioning the agency's lack of public acknowledgement of Manon

Another post introduces a comparison between Manon's and Sophia's situations. The user questions why Sophia is able to communicate that she is on a health hiatus while Manon appears unable to provide a similar update. The post interprets this difference as suspicious and accuses the agency of mistreating Manon, further suggesting that information surrounding her situation should be brought to light. This comparison demonstrates how audiences may use information from one member's announcement to evaluate the communication surrounding another member's absence. Rather than interpreting the announcements independently, the user places them side by side and treats the differences in their content as a basis for questioning the agency's conduct. However, the post represents the user's interpretation and does not establish that the members experienced different treatment or that the agency prevented Manon from communicating.



Figure 6. Fan criticism by @MeTha2786318670 comparing the agency's communication regarding Manon and Sophia

Uncertainty about Manon's future with KATSEYE is also reflected in a post questioning whether she remains an official member of the group. Rather than making a definite prediction about her return, the user raises the absence of confirmation regarding her status and considers the implications of her continued affiliation with the group. This response illustrates how uncertainty surrounding a hiatus may extend beyond the duration of an absence to questions about a member's future professional involvement. However, the post does not provide evidence that Manon's membership has changed; it reflects the user's unresolved questions about her position within KATSEYE.

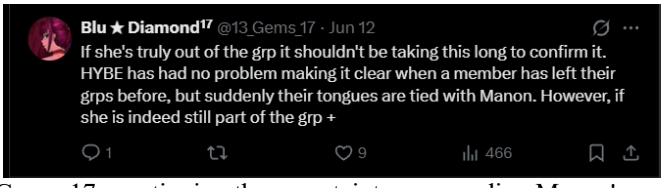


Figure 7. Fan post by @13_Gems_17 questioning the uncertainty surrounding Manon's continued status in KATSEYE.

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The selected audience responses also reveal different concerns surrounding Sophia's absence. While the posts concerning Manon primarily question the agency's communication and her continued position within KATSEYE, the selected responses concerning Sophia introduce discussions about the public perception of her absence, tensions within the fandom, and the company's responsibilities toward audiences. These perspectives broaden the analysis by showing how discussions surrounding a hiatus may extend beyond the official explanation of an individual's absence.

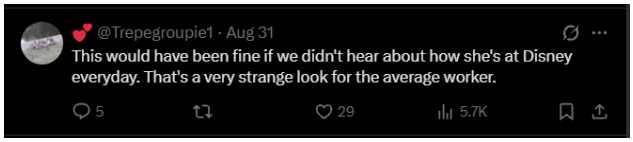


Figure 8. Fan criticism by @Trepegroupie1 questioning the perceived inconsistency between Sophia's absence and reports of her frequent visits to Disney

The post by @Trepegroupie1 questions the apparent contrast between Sophia's absence from group activities and reports of her frequent visits to Disney. The user suggests that such information makes the situation appear unusual, particularly when considered alongside her temporary withdrawal from professional activities. Rather than directly disputing the importance of health and well-being, the post expresses dissatisfaction with what the user perceives as an inconsistency between Sophia's absence from scheduled activities and her reported activities elsewhere. This response illustrates how information circulating outside official announcements can influence audience interpretations of a member's hiatus. However, the post reflects the user's perception and does not establish the circumstances of Sophia's reported activities or the reasons for her absence from group schedules.

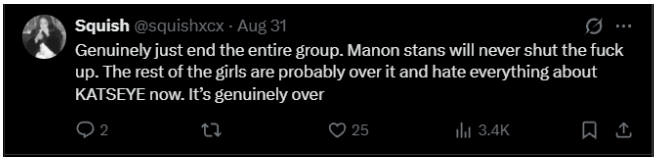


Figure 9. Fan response by @squishxcx criticizing fandom conflict surrounding Manon and KATSEYE

A different perspective appears in the post by @squishxcx, which expresses frustration with the conflict between Manon's supporters and other members of the KATSEYE fandom. The user suggests that repeated disputes involving Manon's supporters have negatively affected the group's public image and the atmosphere surrounding the fandom. Unlike the previous post, which focuses on perceptions of Sophia's activities, this response shifts attention toward the wider fan community and the tensions that emerge during discussions about the members. It demonstrates how hiatus-related discourse can become intertwined with disagreements between fan groups, potentially moving the discussion away from the original circumstances of an individual member's absence.



Figure 10. Fan response by @paromeza questioning the company's responsibility toward audiences after selling tickets and VIP passes

The post by @paromeza presents a more qualified position, acknowledging that the members need to be in good health to perform while also questioning the company's responsibility toward audiences who have purchased tickets and VIP passes. The user refers to the advertised performance schedule and argues that the company should fulfill its obligations to ticket holders. This response introduces a dimension of organizational accountability that differs from the concerns expressed in the Manon-focused posts. Rather than concentrating on the absent member's status or the agency's acknowledgment of her situation, the user emphasizes the relationship between the company's communication, its commercial commitments, and audience expectations. The post therefore illustrates how discussions surrounding a member's hiatus may also involve the responsibilities of entertainment companies toward consumers.

Taken together, the selected posts concerning Manon and Sophia demonstrate that audience interpretations extend across several dimensions of celebrity hiatus communication. While the Manon-focused responses emphasize agency accountability, acknowledgment, perceived unequal treatment, and uncertainty about group status, the Sophia-related responses introduce concerns about public perception, fandom conflict, and the company's obligations to

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audiences. These themes illustrate the different ways users engage with information surrounding the two members' absences. Table 2 summarizes the main concerns identified across the seven selected posts.

Table 2. Thematic Summary of Selected Audience Responses to Manon and Sophia's Hiatuses

Identified Theme	Focus of Audience Response	Interpretation
Agency accountability	Questions whether the agency prioritizes contractual obligations over Manon's well-being (Figure 4).	Reframes the hiatus as an issue of organizational responsibility rather than solely an individual health matter.
Lack of public acknowledgment	Criticism of the agency's perceived lack of communication and recognition of Manon's situation (Figure 5).	Positions transparency and acknowledgment as important aspects of the agency's communication responsibilities.
Perceived unequal treatment	Compares the communication surrounding Manon's and Sophia's respective hiatuses (Figure 6).	Uses differences in official information to construct a perception of possible unequal treatment.
Uncertainty about group status	Questions whether Manon remains an official member of KATSEYE (Figure 7).	Illustrates uncertainty extending beyond the duration of the hiatus to Manon's future within the group.
Perceived inconsistency	Questions the contrast between Sophia's absence from group activities and reports of her frequent visits to Disney (Figure 8).	Shows how information outside official announcements can shape perceptions of a member's hiatus.
Fandom conflict	Criticizes hostility and disagreements involving Manon's supporters and other KATSEYE fans (Figure 9).	Demonstrates how discussions surrounding members' absences can become intertwined with tensions within the fandom.
Organizational responsibility toward audiences	Questions the company's obligations to ticket holders and VIP pass purchasers (Figure 10).	Extends the discussion of hiatuses to commercial commitments and audience expectations.

The thematic comparison shows that the selected responses do not approach the two members' absences from identical perspectives. The Manon-related posts focus more directly on the agency's communication and her position within the group, whereas the Sophia-related posts raise questions about the public perception of her activities, tensions among fans, and the company's obligations to its audiences. Although the seven posts represent a limited selection of public responses, they illustrate how different aspects of a celebrity hiatus can become subjects of discussion beyond the information provided in official announcements.

The findings demonstrate that official communication and audience interpretation do not always construct the same understanding of a situation. In both cases, HYBE x Geffen presents the members' temporary absences as decisions related to health and well-being, emphasizing the importance of recovery and the agency's support. However, the selected audience responses reveal that this explanation does not necessarily address every concern raised in public discussions. Some users redirect their attention toward the agency's communication practices, while others question the consistency of publicly available information, discuss tensions within the fandom, or emphasize the company's obligations to audiences. This suggests that the meaning of a celebrity hiatus is not established solely through an official announcement but can also develop through audience interpretations of what has been communicated and what remains unexplained.

This difference can first be understood through Entman's (1993) Framing Theory. The agency's announcements establish an initial interpretation of both situations by defining the absences as health-related matters, presenting the members' well-being as the central concern, and communicating temporary withdrawal from group activities as an appropriate response. Through this approach, the agency directs attention toward the members' health rather than the potential professional or organizational implications of their absences. However, the selected fan posts introduce alternative frames that shift the focus toward institutional accountability. For example, the post by @YakupF34477 questions whether the agency is prioritizing contractual obligations over Manon's well-being. This interpretation reframes the issue from an individual health-related hiatus into a question of organizational responsibility. The concern is no longer limited to why Manon is absent but extends to whether the agency is fulfilling its responsibilities toward a member of the group.

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A similar shift can be identified in the post by @outrosza, which criticizes the perceived lack of public acknowledgment of Manon. The post suggests that the agency should communicate more openly rather than allowing group activities to continue without addressing her situation. Through Entman's framing functions, this response can be understood as a different problem definition from the one presented in the official announcement (Mubina & Prananda, 2024). While the agency defines the situation through health and recovery, the user identifies insufficient communication as an additional problem. Its causal interpretation places responsibility on the agency's communication practices, while its moral evaluation questions whether the member is receiving appropriate recognition and consideration. The implied treatment recommendation is greater acknowledgment and more transparent communication. This demonstrates how audiences can construct alternative interpretations that challenge the emphasis of an institutional message without necessarily disputing the original health-related explanation.

The comparison between Manon and Sophia further illustrates how differences in available information can become part of audience interpretation. In the post by @MeTha2786318670, the user directly compares the communication surrounding the two members' health-related absences and questions why Sophia appears able to communicate about her situation while Manon's circumstances remain less clear. This comparison is significant because it demonstrates that audiences may not evaluate an announcement independently. Instead, information about one individual can become a reference point for interpreting another individual's situation, particularly when both belong to the same group and experience similar circumstances. Sophia's announcement provides information about medical consultations, extended rest, and a planned reassessment, while Manon's announcement offers a more general explanation without a comparable timeline. The user draws on this difference to construct an interpretation involving possible unequal treatment. However, this interpretation should be understood as an audience-generated frame rather than evidence that the agency has actually treated the members differently.

The Sophia-related posts introduce additional frames that extend the discussion beyond comparisons of official announcements. The post by @Trepegroupie1 questions the perceived consistency between Sophia's absence from group activities and reports of her activities outside those commitments. This response shifts attention toward how publicly circulating information can shape perceptions of an individual's circumstances. Meanwhile, @parometa frames the situation through organizational accountability by emphasizing the company's obligations to audiences who have purchased tickets and VIP passes. The two posts demonstrate how users can interpret a hiatus through different concerns, including public perception and commercial responsibility, rather than focusing exclusively on the member's health. The post by @squishxcx adds another dimension by highlighting conflict within the fandom. Although it does not directly evaluate Sophia's hiatus, it illustrates how discussions involving members' absences can become entangled with disputes among fan groups.

Uncertainty Reduction Theory (Berger & Calabrese, 1975) provides another perspective for understanding these responses. When audiences receive information that does not fully explain an unfamiliar situation, they may seek additional information to establish a clearer understanding. In the case of Manon's hiatus, the absence of a specific return timeline and subsequent official clarification leaves several questions unresolved. The selected posts reflect this uncertainty through criticism of the agency's communication, comparisons with Sophia's announcement, and questions about Manon's continued position within the group. These responses illustrate how some users draw on publicly available information to interpret circumstances that have not been fully explained. In this context, social media becomes a space where users exchange interpretations and attempt to make sense of information gaps in official communication.

The post by @13_Gems_17 particularly illustrates the relationship between uncertainty and the evaluation of available information. By questioning the lack of confirmation regarding Manon's status in KATSEYE, the user highlights an unresolved issue that extends beyond the duration of her hiatus. The concern involves whether her temporary absence has implications for her continued participation in the group. This distinction is important because uncertainty surrounding a hiatus may involve several dimensions, including the member's health, the duration of the absence, and the future of their professional activities. Although the official announcement identifies health and well-being as the reasons for Manon's temporary withdrawal, it does not explicitly address all these dimensions. Consequently, some users may continue seeking clarification even after receiving an official explanation. The post therefore demonstrates that the presence of an official announcement does not automatically eliminate uncertainty when audiences consider the information incomplete.

The Sophia-related posts also demonstrate how audiences may draw on information beyond official announcements when interpreting an ongoing absence. The post by @Trepegroupie1 uses reports of Sophia's activities outside group schedules as a basis for questioning the perceived consistency of her situation. From the perspective of Uncertainty Reduction Theory, this response can be considered an example of how audiences use available information to form interpretations when official explanations do not address every question they have. However, the post does not establish that the user has obtained reliable or complete information about Sophia's circumstances. Rather, it illustrates how publicly circulating claims can become part of the process through which audiences attempt to make sense of an absence.

The comparison with Sophia's subsequent return announcement adds another dimension to this discussion. Her October update establishes a specific period for her anticipated return in January 2027 and clarifies which activities she will not participate in during the remainder of 2026. From the perspective of Uncertainty Reduction Theory, this additional information addresses some of the questions that remained unresolved after her initial announcement. It provides audiences with a clearer expectation regarding the duration of her absence and the next stage of her participation in group

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activities. Manon's official materials, in contrast, do not provide an equivalent return timeline. This difference illustrates how subsequent organizational updates can contribute to a more defined understanding of an ongoing situation. Nevertheless, it would be premature to conclude that Sophia's announcement successfully reduced uncertainty among fans or that Manon's lack of an update necessarily produced greater speculation across the entire fandom without examining a broader sample of audience responses.

The findings also highlight the relationship between transparency and privacy in celebrity communication. Health-related announcements involve information that audiences may consider relevant to understanding an artist's absence, but they also concern personal circumstances that should not automatically be disclosed in full. Manon's announcement communicates a general explanation while maintaining greater privacy regarding the details of her situation. Sophia's announcement provides additional context through references to medical consultations and extended care, yet it also avoids disclosing specific medical information. These approaches demonstrate that transparency does not necessarily mean providing unrestricted access to personal information. Rather, organizations must balance the public's need for clarification with the individual's right to privacy. The criticism expressed in the selected posts may therefore be understood not simply as a demand for private details, but as a request for clearer acknowledgment of the member's status and the agency's communication responsibilities.

Another important consideration is the role of organizational continuity in the construction of these announcements. Both statements reassure audiences that KATSEYE's activities will continue despite the members' absences. This emphasis helps maintain the perception that the group remains operational and that its professional commitments will proceed. However, when considered alongside the selected audience responses, this reassurance may not fully address concerns about the absent members' positions within the group or the company's responsibilities toward audiences. The continuation of scheduled activities and the absence of a confirmed return timeline can be interpreted differently by users, depending on the information they prioritize. For some, the continuation of group activities may simply reflect professional scheduling. For others, it may raise questions about the visibility and recognition of the absent member or the fulfillment of commercial commitments. This illustrates how the same organizational circumstances can generate different concerns among audiences.

Collectively, the two theoretical perspectives demonstrate how official communication and audience interpretation interact in the construction of celebrity hiatus narratives. Framing Theory explains how the agency initially presents the absences as health-related decisions and how selected users introduce alternative interpretations concerning accountability, acknowledgment, public perception, and organizational responsibility. Uncertainty Reduction Theory helps explain why incomplete information may encourage audiences to seek clarification, compare available statements, and discuss unresolved questions through social media. The comparison between Manon's and Sophia's announcements further indicates that differences in the specificity and continuity of official information shape the information available for public interpretation. Although the selected audience posts represent only a limited portion of the wider discussion, they demonstrate that a hiatus announcement can establish an initial narrative that audiences may accept, question, or reframe as additional information and interpretations circulate.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how differences in official communication surrounding Manon and Sophia's hiatuses from KATSEYE relate to audience interpretations on social media. The findings indicate that although HYBE x Geffen presented both absences as health-related matters, the level of information and subsequent updates differed between the two cases. Manon's announcement provided a general explanation concerning her health and well-being without specifying a return timeline, whereas Sophia's announcements offered further details about medical recommendations, a reassessment period, and an anticipated return in January 2027. These differences shaped the information available to audiences and provided distinct points of reference for interpreting each member's absence.

The selected posts demonstrate that audience responses extended beyond the explanations provided by the agency. Discussions concerning Manon focused on agency accountability, public acknowledgment, perceived unequal treatment, and uncertainty about her continued position within the group. Meanwhile, responses concerning Sophia addressed the perceived consistency of information about her absence, tensions within the fandom, and the company's responsibilities toward audiences. Through Entman's Framing Theory, these responses can be understood as alternative interpretations that shift attention from individual health and recovery toward organizational conduct, public perception, and audience expectations. Uncertainty Reduction Theory further helps explain how information gaps may encourage users to compare available statements, draw on circulating information, and seek clarification about circumstances that remain unresolved.

Overall, the findings suggest that official hiatus announcements establish an initial explanation but do not necessarily determine how audiences understand an artist's absence. The specificity and continuity of organizational communication influence the information available for public interpretation, while social media provides a space in which users can question, evaluate, and reframe that information. Nevertheless, the selected posts represent a limited sample of public discussion and cannot be taken as representative of the wider KATSEYE fandom. Furthermore, audience claims and interpretations do not establish the actual circumstances of either member's absence or demonstrate differences in their treatment by the agency. Future research could examine a larger sample of audience responses across multiple

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platforms, extend the observation period, and incorporate interviews or surveys to explore how fans evaluate official communication and develop interpretations of celebrity hiatuses.

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