

# Consumptive Culture in BTS Fandom (ARMY) in D.I.Yogyakarta

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## ABSTRACT

### Keywords

Consumptive Behavior  
Popular Culture  
Korean Wave  
Fandom  
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This study aims to analyze about the consumptive culture that were found in the online community of ARMY Yogyakarta which is part of the BTS Jogja community on Instagram. This research uses a descriptive qualitative research method with a type of research method in the form of virtual ethnography, with a data collection method consisting of virtual observation from bts\_jogja Instagram account, interviews with several respondents online, and documentation. The result of this study shows that consumptive culture was tied with fan cultures, and as a fan base, bts\_jogja Instagram accounts has an influence on developing consumptive culture towards ARMY Yogyakarta community that caused by their fan projects, their Instagram posts, and their Instagram story. Especially if they had a collaboration with mini K-pop outlets to sell merchandise.

## 1. Introduction

The advances of the internet have brought changes to many life aspects. Through the internet, people can access and search for data or information about other regions, or countries easily, including their cultures. This triggered the spreads of popular culture and has a big influence for the development of popular culture. Korean Wave or often referred as Hallyu is one of the Asian versions of popular culture originating from South Korea. According martinroll.com, Korean Wave produces pop culture, entertainment, music, television dramas and films. The Korean Wave recently reaching its peak of popularity. In Indonesia, according to snapcart-global the rising popularity of the Korean Wave has started since 2016 with an index that increased 0.39% from the previous year.

Korean Wave's popularity influenced the rise of a K-Pop fan community in Indonesia which can be seen from the many Instagram accounts belonging to the fan community (fanbase) that consist of various fandoms. Fandom comes from the word "fan" which means fanatic, and "dom" which means domain, kingdom, or group of people (Jin Kim et al., 2018). Fandom is often associated with extravagant and fanatical things. This is because fandoms tend to buy something related to their idols. K-Pop fans are willing to spend a high nominal to meet idols, or to achieve personal happiness and satisfaction. This makes fandom associated with a consumptive behavior. Consumptive behavior refers to consumer behavior when buying, using, considering and spending products or services that are seen as fulfilling their desires This consumptive behavior can be identified through how a person spends money, time and energy on the goods they consume (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997).

In research that has a similar theme in K-Pop fandom and its association with consumptiveness, it was found that Indonesian ARMY who are affected by the hedonistic lifestyle and Korean Wave feels that buying album is a normal thing for them, so they are willingly to spend money to buy BTS albums, especially when BTS makes a comeback. In addition to personal satisfaction, the purchase of this album was also made by Indonesian ARMY as a form of their loyalty to support BTS and to increase the album sales ranking (Fahirra & Andjarwati, 2022).

Consumptive behavior in fans caused by fanaticism which results in fans adopting and adhering to the culture of the Korean Wave, such as dressing the same as their idols. Fans are willingly to search and buy items to follow the same style as CNBlue members (Widarti, 2016). Consumptive activities are inevitable in ARMY, by buying either official or non-official merchandise they feel that they are already a part of BTS fans. In addition, it was also found that ARMY has an emotional connection to BTS so that ARMY interprets their consumption behavior as a contribution in showing their passion for BTS (Farhana Dinningrum & Umi Satiti, 2021) .

In previous studies, the result of analysis only focusing about factors that are the main cause of a fan having consumptive behavior, such as factors to show their loyalty to idols, or fanaticism that causes fans to imitate and wear the same items as idols, and an emotional connection towards their idols. Based on previous studies, it shows that there is still no research that analyze whether consumptive culture in a fan community could be influenced by the existence of a fan base and the project that they're conducted.

Although this research has K-Pop fans as a subject too, there is a different focus on this research. This research is more focused to search about what was the reason behind the consumptive culture that occurred on ARMY Yogyakarta that were followers of bts\_jogja Instagram accounts, and to search about whether Instagram accounts bts\_jogja has influence to developed consumptive culture in the ARMY Yogyakarta.

This research was conducted using qualitative research with a virtual ethnographic approach in order to understand more about the cultures that were in the ARMY Yogyakarta community, with research restrictions on Instagram bts\_jogja from January to December 2022, because in 2022 bts\_jogja account began to active again in posting and holding events after being held in 2019 - 2020 due to Covid-19.

## 2. Method

This research uses descriptive qualitative as a research method, because this research will analyze a fan community phenomenon by utilizing open interviews to study and understand the attitudes, views, feelings and behaviors of individuals or groups of people (Moleong, 2017). This research also used research strategies in the form of virtual ethnography that used to investigate the internet and explore internet users to represent the implications of the community that is in the internet. (Nasrullah, 2018)

The subjects in this study were determined by purposive sampling with a following criteria such as a person with an age range of 18-28 years who are fans of BTS and is an ARMY in Yogyakarta, were a followers of bts\_jogja Instagram account, and at least had participated in one of the fan projects that have been done by bts\_jogja's Instagram account.

The methods to collect data in this research includes (1) virtual observations, which were conducted by observing on bts\_jogja account activities during January and December 2022, (2) interviews, which were conducted on several respondents with the initials VD, IA and NE, and (3) documentation, obtained through bts\_jogja's Instagram account. The data analysis technique in this study is using data analysis techniques that have been introduced by Sugiyono (2014) that data analysis is consisted of three stages, which is (1) reduction, (2) display data, and (3) verification or drawing conclusions.

## 3. Result and Discussion

### 3.1. Identity as an ARMY

Fandom consist of fans from a certain-groups that gathered into one big fan community. In building their identity as a fandom, ARMY Yogyakarta shows their identity through their collection of BTS merchandise, both official and non-official merchandise, and could be seen through participation in a fan-projects.

Merchandise is an item released by idols with various forms, ranging from small items such as PCs, bracelets, LS, to large items such as posters. According to IA, fans tend to buy merch and even collected them. By purchasing items related to BTS, fans can feel happy, because they get their own

satisfaction and developed a sense of addiction to continue to collect merchandise. Conformity factors was one of the reasons fans tend to wear and collect merchandise that were offered by public figures (Dwi Astuti, 2013).

VD and IA respondents argue that having BTS merchandise is needed to show one's identity as an ARMY. Having merchandise is the most important thing in showing one's identity as part of the ARMY. With this, people can know that they are ARMY at that time because it can be seen directly from uploads on social media, or merchandise brought. Fans feel that there is an obligation to own merchandise because it is the main way to show their identity as an ARMY.

However, NE respondents have the opinion that having merchandise is not really necessary to show one's identity as an ARMY, because there are other ways to show that this self is part of the ARMY.

"Having merchandise is not that necessary to show that we are an ARMY, there are other ways that can be used to show our identity as an ARMY, such as voting for BTS, or streaming BTS songs".

### 3.2. Fan Base as Media

Social media can be used as a forum to facilitate the spread of fan culture, because social media provides convenience to organize and direct fans, with good use of the platform it can generate active responses from online-based fans (Bennett, 2014).

Through their Instagram account, bts\_jogja has a role as a fanbase for the ARMY in Yogyakarta. Fanbase has a role as an information provider for fans who are parts of the fandom (Kertajaya, 2008). As a fan base that provides information, bts\_jogja Instagram account has some influences in developing a consumptive culture in the ARMY Yogyakarta while doing fan culture practices that can be seen from their activities on Instagram. The three informants stated that what bts\_jogja posted on their Instagram accounts makes them has the urge to either participating on fan projects that were being conducted, or buying something that was promoted by bts\_jogja Instagram accounts.

Aside-form providing various information related to BTS, bts\_jogja has a focus on creating fan projects such as hold an ARMY Yogyakarta gathering events, celebrating BTS anniversaries, celebrate BTS member birthday with birthday events, and also hold a watch video concerts together agenda. In organizing events, bts\_jogja usually cooperates with small K-Pop outlets that sell merchandise of various kinds of K-Pop idols, especially BTS.

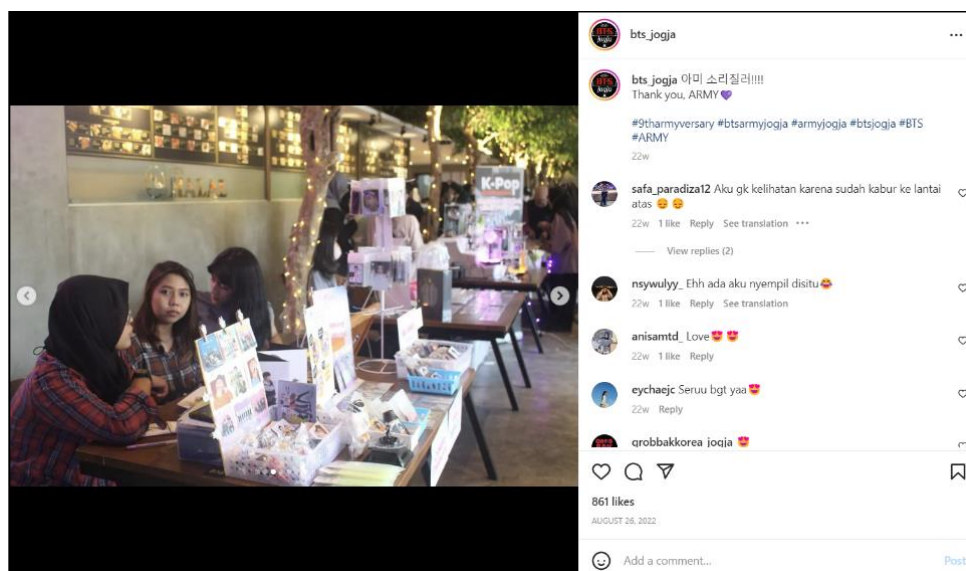


Fig. 1. Post About a Small Stand on BTS 9<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event

The existence of various kinds of outlets on sites makes participants feel tempted and motivated to buy some of their merchandise, because there are many adorable and cheap merchandise, especially if the outlet has many buyers on sight, said IA. With the presence of motivation, a person will tend to buy something without reconsidering rationally (Kotler & Keller, 2009).

### 3.3. Fan Projects

Participating in an activity is a part of a fan culture. Fan projects as one of the fan activities that are often encountered in offline events or online, are activities made by fans that aimed to show their appreciation and love for idols. Fan projects were divided into two, one is aimed directly towards the idols, and the other one was directed indirectly towards their idols. (Kusuma, 2014)

As a fan base, bts\_jogja Instagram account often created projects that has goals to support BTS, and showing their love towards BTS. There are a few fan projects that have been done in form of an events in 2022 such as BTS Yet To Come in Busan, ARMY Sorijilleo, BTS 9<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Nonton Bersama BTS PTD LAS VEGAS, AND Nonton Bersama BTS PTD SEOUL.

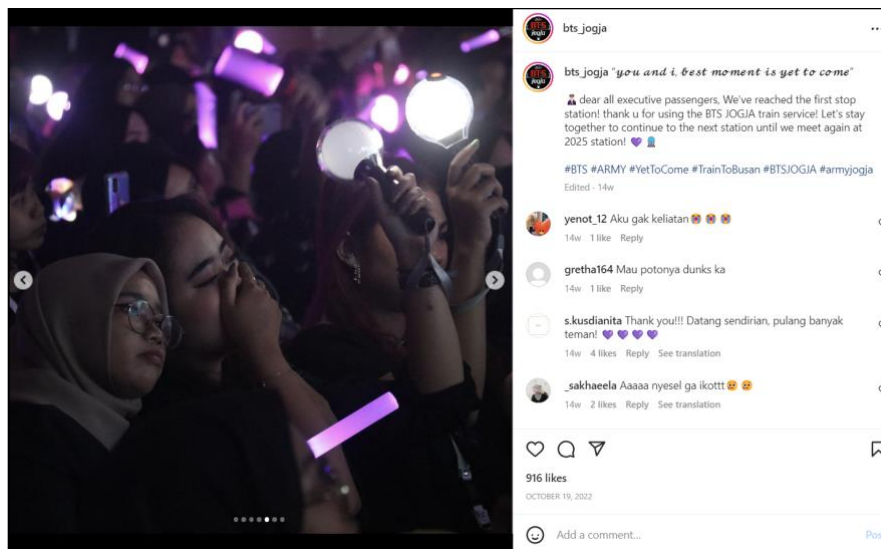


Fig. 2. ARMY Yogyakarta Brings Personal Lightstick at Watch Together Event

Fans usually will bring their own merchandise if it's necessarily needed, at the watch together event, it can be seen that many ARMY Yogyakarta brought BTS official lightstick for cheering during the BTS Yet to Come in Busan screening.

Seeing friends from the same fandoms own and carried various kinds of BTS merchandise, especially the official merchandise, caused a feeling of wanting to buy the same item so that they're not going to have a feeling of left behind with others. Owning and buying merchandise could also show's one's validity of their identity as an ARMY. VD expressed a high desire to buy a lightstick, especially after participating in a fan project in the form of events. She wanted to buy BTS lightstick to shows the true identity of an ARMY in her (Dwi Astuti, 2013).

"Because I still haven't been able to buy LS, so I have a desire to buy lightstick. Because I also wanted to experience what it's like to hold an official lightstick and wanted to participate in swinging the lightstick with others."

### 4. Conclusion

From the results above, we can conclude that the reason behind consumptive culture in ARMY Yogyakarta were caused by the existence of motivational factors. Thus, it makes consumptive culture in ARMY Yogyakarta were inevitable, because fans constantly want to show supports for their idols by spending their money to buys anything related to their idols.

From the practice of fan cultures such as buying and collecting merchandise, conducting and participating on fan projects, or participating on fan gathering, all of those activities were tied to a consumptive behavior. Therefore, this repeated behavior caused the development of consumptive culture in ARMY Yogyakarta community.

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