

# Social Identity of Millennial Generation: A Study on K-Pop Community of College Student

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**Abstract.** The background of this research comprises; (1) K-Pop fever extends to all over the world, (2) the development of communication and technology accelerates the alteration within society, (3) unique social identity is expressed by the millennial generation. The statement of the problem in this research relies on “How is the social identity of the millennial generation on the K-Pop community?” Research significances are expected to; (1) enhance and enrich social science study especially in accordance with the social behavioral impact of technology and internet, (2) provide comprehension and reference to the reader as well as the internet impacts among the younger generation in social life. This research is qualitatively designed. The individual is decided as the unit analysis while observation unit refers to attitude and behavior of the K-Pop community of college student members. Meanwhile, Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model is applied in the sense of data analysis in this research. The result reveals, social identities that occurred among millennial generation on the K-Pop community are; (1) peer group really powers their social identity, (2) significant changes that relates to their daily habits (the way they speak, preference of attribute and social community) emerged, (3) individual of the community indicates new identity in other communities.

**Keywords:** *Social identity, millennial generation, K-Pop community*

## INTRODUCTION

The alteration of attitude, as well as behavior, is not only influenced by cultural background as it has been proposed by some cultural identity theorists. They underline that the alteration of society in the sense of attitude and behavior refers to the place where they live. However, the changes occur within the social scope that does not only mean as a physical social intercommunication. The development of communication and technology seems to take part in this state since its existence can be neglected.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has invented major simplicity including the emergence of online communities. Fans community or Fans Kingdom (Fandom) is one of the examples. It gathers young generations all over an area whose birth was in the

internet era. They enjoy the internet as well as the emergence of popular culture that is supported by communication simplicity. Hence, fans community is certainly formed and linked. Besides, an exclusive community of social identity on millennials has been well-shaped by themselves. [1]

The Korean Wave (Hallyu) is extremely exploding as one of the fans communities in Indonesia. Accordingly, K-Pop (Korea Pop) or Korean Pop Music turns out to be a part of Korean Wave. In fact, K-Pop is basically a popular music genre originally from South Korea. Western music such as pop, rock, jazz, R&B, and hip-hop influence its existence.

The rapid development of K-Pop has been adequate a special identity of the younger generation. Additionally, exclusive and unique millennial K-Pop community comes into existence for another impact remembering its deficiency and advantages. Whether or not K-Pop is able to figure out a unique social identity that is unlike from other communities, it still influences the attitude and behavior among millennials. Undoubtedly, K-Pop comprises to the history of Indonesian millennials development. By and large, they are forthcoming to be investigated by means of rapid communication and technology acceleration.

Millennials age group is introduced in 1987 to indicate 1982's for a moment of entering pre-school. They acquired media exposure in accordance with the millennium era. [2] The growth of that generation adheres to internet power.

Furthermore, they mostly live in a city and create a fandom community. *Fans* refer to people who actively consume and involve in their passion and hobby; texts, coin collector, philately, merchandise collector for the favorite football team, and the like. In the *fandom* context, fans do not include in a specific admirer community as well as take into account in its duty. Fandom counts heavily on gathering activity and emphasizes on social interaction for a specific culture, closed institution, and community whose members are pledging in a subcultural group context. [3]

In reality, an individual's attitude and behavior will not detach from other individual or group influences. Individual, as well as social relationship and vice versa, can be identified from some point of views. Regularly, their behavior proposes a changing in line with personal revolution and the group's impact level. Hence, social identity theory comes up to seek social emergence.

Henri Tajfel proposed the first social identity theory [4]. Principally, that concept sticks to the development that is more systematic from his personal taste regards to group perception, prejudice or perceptual, social categorization, social comparison, discrimination, and conflict.

Briefly, Michael Hogg states that Tajfel social identity theory breaks down four research matters. First and foremost, searching for the way identical categorization shapes people perceptually in the sense of distinguishing the existing sorts. Second, analyzing the role of cognitive manners, mainly for the perceptual set. Third, research regards to discrimination tendency of up hazard appraisal to former individuals. Fourth, research design about individuals tendency for the sake of establishing the differences between the individual (as a part of ingroup) and other individuals (as a part of the outgroup) in intergroup relationship framework. [4]

Social identity thought defines the procedure of self-improvement concept in community membership of ongoing process and intercommunity affiliation. The assumption on this idea relies on a belief of straitened collective attitude. In addition, it can be explained solely in keeping with the individual level process or individuals interaction, but those are determined by value, norm, attribute, or behavioral pattern that collectively shared in a group. Furthermore, individual behavior is not regulated by an independent agent for permitted selection anymore, and it occurs in self-identification as part of the group. Besides, social identity comprises to self-concept that initially derives from information during periodical group membership where they inadvertently internalize values, participate in escalating the awareness, and are worth for being a group member. [5]

Additionally, social identity framework covers the social tendency in linking between individual and crowd. A member of a group will be a reflection and even representative of his or her group identity. It does not mean that a follower does not partake in social autonomy action, but is closely related to a societal scope where he or she is active.

Henri Tajfel notes, “the individual’s knowledge that belongs to certain social group together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership,” while community is defined as “collective of people sharing the same identity, compete with one another to be distinctive in evaluatively positive ways they compete over consensual status and prestige.” [4]

M.B Brewer mentions four types of social identity; (1) person based social identities mirror property of group characteristic that are internalized by group members into their self-concept, (2) relational social identities provoke self-identity through social interaction in intergroup affiliation point of view, (3) group-bases social identities cause a reflection on social identity that is commonly accepted by this theory, and (4) collective identities are defined as members who do not only share their self-attribute but enrolled in social action to form an

image of group identity. So, people and other groups increase in value that acts. [6]

In the sense of K-Pop social identity alteration, two models of processes occur which are inductive and deductive. Firstly, the inductive model draws the process of social identity alteration from the individual perspective. It starts when an individual feels becoming part of a group, but he or she does not realize yet about the importance of collective identity to unite membership. After that, the individual will understand the social relation that demands the group for taking a certain position up on other groups. Frequently, it grows in a competitive relationship pattern, so some members look after the prominence of social identity to symbolize other followers. Secondly, the deductive model relies on top-down social identity alteration. It is transported from group to individual that is signed by the internalization values and group attribution to the individual concept. [7]

This research aims to figure out how the social identity of the millennial generation on the K-Pop community is, exclusively for its interaction occurrences.

#### METHOD

This research is qualitatively designed for the explanative type of research. In this research, the subject is based on the research problem data sufficiency. [8] The individual is decided as the unit analysis while observation unit refers to attitude and behavior of the K-Pop community of college student members. Research subject comprises 23 college students. Meanwhile, Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model is applied in the sense of data analysis of this research.

#### RESULT

K-Pop community members are selected in order to be the subject of this research. K-Pop affects attitude and behavior of its fans since it brings up a global trend. The influences are (1) style revolution and diction preference, (2) transformation in using the attribute, (3) bonding the solidarity among members.

K-Popers often employ Korean utterances, one of them is “omo” which means “Oh my God!”. Meanwhile, they habitually mix and match Korean fashion style including their hairdo. Blackpink, as one of the most well-known Korean girl groups, seems to take part in triggering people to adapt their fashion and hairstyle. Some of them argue that it is obligatory for people to listen EXO and BTS songs in accordance with recognition for considering them as a “cool guy”. They are loyal followers for initializing their idols in the sense of fashion and lifestyle. Besides, they share the same spirit and strengthen each other members as an effort for admiring K-Pop culture. Further, sharing a story, songs, and attributes exist in their standard of living.

One of SHINee (a Korean boyband) fans admits following what Minho (former member of SHINee) does. In addition, Minho states, “I think artists and their fans are like a mirror, my image is my fans image, and my

fans image is my image". This clarification remains an excuse that K-Popers do what their idols do.

From the explanation above, clearly, imitation efforts occur within K-Popers and their idols. Moreover, they seem to be an exclusive societal and are considered the introvert. They build a strong foundation for their identity as K-Popers. Internally, that community powers their identity since they show up to the outside group. Hoog provides support on phenomena of spectacles toward K-Popers [4]. The tendency of making difference between an individual (as a part of ingroup) and society (as a part of the outgroup) in community relationship is about to appear.

K-Popers assume, they receive positive benefits for whole duties in joining K-Pop community. Going to Korea and learning its language are in their wishlists. In addition, collecting K-Pop merchandises seems urgent. They further argue that they need to charge the battery more in order to strengthen and develop group solidarity. In the daily life context, K-Pop turns out to be a life catharsis medium where enjoyment, fatigue, sadness, and anger emerge. Besides, it is worthy of being a problem transfer as well as an inner satisfaction escape. In other words, K-Pop arises in societal catharsis.

Self-concept configuration among K-Popers does not influence their group membership, but they do an encouragement toward each other community. Probably, their collective performance cannot only be recognized by personal behavior while group collective regulation is essentials to be considered. Group collective regulation determines independent desire similarly with the individual concept. In line with social identity theory, those states likely stick to the individual concept during self-discovery. Purposefully, they internalized values for participating and increasing group awareness and admiration. [5]

The massive impact of K-Pop target the native culture to disappear. However, it depends on membership group commitment. Unconsciously, their authentic attribute is changed to typical K-Pop attribute including language and behavior. The cultural problem that is too far affecting local values of K-Popers is undisputed. On the other hand, it is clearly spoken that K-Pop strongly influences Indonesian authentic cultural values. In social science studies, that utterance is well-known as cultural imperialism.

Millennials are dominated K-Popers who are unstable and still searching for an identity. They argue that K-Pop is an essential part of their culture while it cannot be discredited from themselves. Some of them are even willing to leave religion obligation for worshipping. In addition, while they are streaming, at the same time, K-Popers are skipping time to eat and drink. Hence, those facts draw a conclusion that K-Pop grows into an element of their need.

K-Pop grows up rapidly through advanced communication and technology mediator. Internet is

decided as one of the inventories that accelerates cultural expanding. Meanwhile, the millennial generation is close to internet literacy. That is to say, K-Pop flourishes among the millennial age group.

K-Pop community is as exclusive as other communities. However, it has differentiator in the sense of language preference, attribute, as well as behavior that trigger group identity to be even stronger. K-Pop is a social identity based on a community that influences individual attitude and behavior. K-Popers will be more reliable in the area of outside group social interaction. Besides, in order to build up a group image, typically they run a social action in accordance with showing up, figuring people's perception, and behaving differently from other groups.

#### CONCLUSION

The result reveals, social identities that occurred among millennial generation on the K-Pop community are: (1) peer group really powers their social identity, (2) significant changes that relate to their daily habits (the way they speak, preference of attribute and social community) emerged, (3) individual of the community indicates new identity in other communities, and (4) K-Pop is defined as global cultural imperialism.

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