

Communication Privacy Management as an Effort to Manage K-Pop Fanboy Identity Information

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Abstract

K-Pop fanboys are a group of fans who still find it challenging to escape stigmatization. This condition limits them from freely and openly showing their passion for K-Pop. Fanboys tend to be more careful in showing their passion due to concerns about negative responses from others. The application of CPM theory in this study is to find out how K-Pop fanboys manage their privacy regarding their information related to their identity. This research uses a qualitative method with data collection using interview techniques with four K-Pop fanboys. The result of this study is that three out of four fanboys assess that information related to their identity is private information that needs to be maintained. The experience of being stigmatized directly influences differences in informants' assessment of private information. In the decision-making process to reveal or conceal personal information, three criteria are taken into consideration: contextual criteria (physical setting and social environment), motivational criteria (relational closeness and self-clarification), and risk-benefit ratio criteria. K-Pop fanboys establish boundary linkage with people they trust only. Because they already know each other and have trust, fanboys do not feel the need to make explicit rules about not sharing the information they have shared. In this study, only one fanboy had experienced boundary turbulence.

Keywords: *K-Pop Fanboys, Communication Privacy Management, CPM, Stigmatization.*

Introduction:

The phenomenon of K-Pop fever has become a global phenomenon, with Indonesia being no exception. According to X's annual report, in 2021 Indonesia became the country with the most K-Pop fans and at the same time also the country that talks the most about K-Pop on X (Kim, 2022). In the context of K-Pop culture, male fans are referred to as fanboys. In Indonesia, the existence of K-Pop fanboys is included in a group that is considered less masculine because it is still considered a world that is identical to women. This is because K-Pop culture has been showing a cute, womanly, and

sweet image (Wibowo, Zuryani, & Aditya, 2021). Meanwhile, in Indonesia, the traditional construction of masculinity, which associates masculinity with characteristics such as physical strength, dashing appearance, social status, power, helpfulness, responsibility, intelligence, and power, is still prevalent (Sugiarti, Andalas, & Bhakti, 2022).

In Indonesia, those who are enthusiastic about K-Pop are subjected to stigmatising communication, which often involves the use of pejorative terms related to gender identity. These terms include "homosexual," "sissy," "slob," and others. The stigmatising

messages disseminated about K-Pop fanboys are not far from the narrative that they are a group that is considered to deviate from the hegemony of masculinity in Indonesia, which is still closely related to traditional masculinity. Smith (2007) posits that in order to attract the attention of others quickly, stigma messages must contain elements that can encourage stereotypes and perceptions of stigmatised groups, elicit emotional reactions and outline the reasons for stigmatisation on the grounds of protecting society.

Fitriyani's research (2022) The stereotypes attached to K-Pop fanboys are related to the perception that K-Pop boy groups are considered homosexual and less masculine because of their habits. K-Pop boy group members frequently engage in physical contact, such as hugging and holding hands, as well as emotional displays, such as sulking and crying, and acting cute, which are more commonly observed in women. Consequently, K-Pop is more closely associated with women.

K-Pop has become a popular culture that not only sells new and unique music genres but also a relatively new culture for Indonesia, namely soft masculinity. The concept of masculinity promoted by K-Pop is designed to accommodate the desires of global pop consumers. This allows idol singers to overcome the limiting cultural and national differences (Jung, 2011, p. 170). However, the construction of traditional masculinity in Indonesia is at odds with the understanding of masculinity espoused through Korean popular culture. Consequently, the novel form of masculinity that K-Pop introduces is perceived as peculiar, disliked, and even rejected. The dominance of masculine ideals in Indonesia has resulted in negative experiences for K-Pop enthusiasts. Research conducted by Putri and Savira (2021) found that K-Pop fanboys are often labelled as effeminate, not macho, bencong, and even shunned by their male peers. This is because K-Pop is perceived as a female pursuit, whereas traditionally masculine pursuits such as football and basketball are considered more appropriate for men.

In pre-research interviews conducted in September

2022, data was obtained indicating that fanboys had received negative treatment from non-K-Pop fans. This included being considered strange, being called bencong, banci, and soft bones. A video was uploaded to social media of a K-Pop fanboy who participated in a K-Pop dance competition being thrown by a plastic chair by a woman. The fanboy was subsequently mocked in the comments column for being a "soft bone," a "letoi guy," a "flexible man," and not a "real man". (Instagram.com/jpradarkudus, 2022).

Based on pre-research interviews conducted in September 2022, it can be concluded that negative sentiments and the experience of being a victim of stigmatisation for being a K-Pop fan makes K-Pop fanboys more careful in showing themselves as fans, especially when in an environment that is not only K-Pop fans. In their research, Putri and Savira (2021) found that the fan community became a place of comfort and freedom for the participants, allowing them to express themselves in accordance with their self-image, following a period of unpleasant experiences and self-conflicts that had previously prevented them from doing so.

One strategy employed by fanboys to circumvent potential judgments based on fanboy stereotypes on social media is the creation of a dedicated account or fan account, wherein they restrict self-disclosure by taking refuge in anonymity (Fitriyani, 2022). The initial data collection, conducted in September 2022, revealed that fanboys utilise second accounts on social media to filter out individuals who are permitted to access information related to their passion for K-Pop. Furthermore, fanboys tend to disseminate information related to K-Pop to close friends who also share their passion for the genre.

In essence, the decision to reveal or conceal one's identity as a K-pop fanboy is contingent upon the manner in which individuals position information about their membership as a fanboy and who is permitted to access this information. In the field of communication studies, this behaviour can be discussed in the context of the Communication Privacy Management (CPM) theory proposed by Sandra Petronio. Petronio (2002, p. 2) posits that

personal disclosure is a dialectical process, whereby individuals make decisions about whether or not to disclose personal information based on a set of criteria and conditions that they deem important. In addition, individuals have the right to determine who is allowed to access their personal information.

K-Pop fanboys are a group of fans who are often stigmatised and verbally abused. The stigmatisation of K-Pop fans has an impact on their attitude, which becomes more cautious in order to avoid the possibility of hatred and bullying. This study applies the CPM theory to the phenomenon of K-Pop fanboys in order to ascertain how they manage their privacy.

Body Text:

This research employs the interpretive paradigm as its theoretical framework. In accordance with Muslim (2008), the interpretive paradigm departs from the objective search for explanations for social or cultural events based on the views and experiences of the people studied. Consequently, the facts in this approach are flexible, as they are not fixed and unchanging.

The research approach employed in this study is qualitative and descriptive in type. As Denzin and Lincoln (Snape & Spencer, 2003, p. 2) posit, qualitative researchers engage in the process of understanding and interpretation of phenomena based on the shared meaning of social reality as perceived by individuals. In contrast, descriptive qualitative research is a strategy for systematically, realistically, and accurately describing data, with the aim of exploring the meaning of social reality in greater depth (Kriyantono, 2020, p. 62).

The research employs in-depth interviews as the primary method for data collection. In-depth interviewing is a technique for collecting data or information by meeting informants in person to obtain comprehensive and detailed responses. Unlike other forms of interviewing, in-depth interviewing allows informants to respond freely, without the researcher exerting control over the content of the responses (Kriyantono, 2020, pp. 291-292).

The research informants were selected through a purposive sampling technique, with the research informant criteria applied to potential research informants. The research subjects were selected on the basis of certain characteristics that are believed to represent the subject under study and to have an understanding of the problem being studied (Ritchie, Lewis, & El am, 2003, p. 78).

The data analysis techniques et al. (2014, pp. 31-33) were applied in this study, with the application of three data analysis flows: data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification.

Result and discussion:

Personal Information Related to Identity as a K-Pop Fan

Private information is defined as information that is considered to be confidential and conveyed when making disclosures (Petronio, 2002, p. 3). In this study, the term "private information" is used to refer to data pertaining to the identity of informants who are K-Pop fanboys. Of the four informants, three (AV, GS, and VT) view their identity as male K-Pop fans as information that needs to be protected. In contrast, one informant, DB, considered his identity to be something that should be open to discussion and was therefore not inclined to hide it.

The judgement of the informants' identity is influenced by their experience of being a K-Pop fan. For one informant, the formation of their identity was not influenced by a need to guard it. Rather, it was shaped by their positive experiences within their social environment. With regard to the remaining three informants, they have previously experienced stigmatisation, which has led them to adopt a strategy of maintaining information related to their identity. In line with the findings of Afifi and Olson (Hays & Butauski, 2018), individuals tend to be reluctant to disclose information that has been stigmatised, due to concerns about potential negative consequences. It is not the case that all types of information related to an informant's identity are maintained by them in the public domain. For three informants who consider that their identity is something that needs to be maintained, they only share information about the songs they are listening

to and music videos they are watching with the public. The three informants will discuss matters pertaining to K-Pop, including issues, gossip, and the latest news, only with individuals they consider to be trustworthy.

Decision Criteria for Disclosure of Private Information

In CPM theory, there are five criteria that can influence individuals in the disclosure process. The first is cultural criteria, which refers to the influence of cultural factors on the decision to disclose. The second is gender criteria, which concerns the gender-specific factors that may influence the decision to disclose. The third is motivational criteria, which encompasses the motivational factors that may influence the decision to disclose. The fourth is contextual criteria, which refers to the contextual factors that may influence the decision to disclose. Finally, the fifth is risk and benefit considerations criteria, which concerns the risk and benefit considerations that may influence the decision to disclose. (Petronio, 2002) The results of the interviews with informants indicated that the criteria considered in the decision to disclose private information are contextual, motivational, and risk and benefit considerations.

As outlined by Petronio (2002, p. 25), two key elements constitute the contextual criteria that can influence individuals in making decisions regarding the disclosure of private information. These are the physical setting and the social environment. The physical setting context in this study occurs in DB, who requires physical presence in the same place as the interlocutor. This allows DB to assess the interlocutor directly, thereby determining whether they have a common interest in K-Pop. In-person meetings facilitate the disclosure process for DB, as they allow for direct observation and assessment of the interlocutor's interest in K-Pop. In the case of VT, the circumstances that facilitate disclosure are being in close proximity to the interlocutor and being alone with them. With regard to GS, the work environment represents the context in which he is able to maintain his identity.

In the context of the social environment, DB and

VT looked at the circumstances around them when deciding whether or not to disclose. For DB, it was important to consider whether the people around her knew about K-pop or liked K-pop. For VT, the condition that can encourage her to disclose is when the environment also talks about K-pop topics.

From the interview results, AV, VT and GS stated that the current social environment, which still has a negative stigma towards male K-pop fans, also influences their decision to maintain their identity due to fear of being stigmatised. A similar situation occurs among PLHIV, where the negative stigma that still exists towards PLHIV makes them think carefully when disclosing (Purnamasari, 2018).

West and Turner (2010, p. 230) posit that motivation can underlie a person's decision to disclose or conceal their private information. The research indicates that the motivations that can influence informants in the decision to disclose or hide private information are relationship closeness motivation and self-clarification. The four research informants demonstrated relationship closeness motivation, with all four admitting that they were more open with friends who were already known or close because they already had trust in their close friends. The existence of trust in the co-owner can lead the information owner to assume that turbulence will not occur (Smith and Bruner, 2017).

DB discloses personal information to friends who are also fans of K-Pop. Similarly, AV adds the criterion of close friends. In contrast, GS elected to share with his high school friends, reasoning that they would be more open to the information and that the response would align with his expectations. VT is only open with one of his colleagues at work. However, VT also considers other parties if they are already known and close to him. Therefore, the degree of closeness between the informant and the recipient is a key factor in determining whether information is disclosed.

The disclosure was with a background of self-clarification, as DB claimed that the stereotype that K-Pop fans are lazy or tacky is not true. As posited by Hays and Butauski (2018), it is probable that an individual disclosing personal information is driven

by a desire to retain control over the dissemination of misinformation pertaining to their condition.

As Petronio (2002, p. 26) notes, an individual's assessment of the potential benefits and risks associated with disclosure can assist in determining the likely outcomes of such disclosure. This consideration of risks and benefits was carried out by all research informants. The manner in which the interlocutor responds when discussing K-Pop topics, the perception of fanboys by their surroundings, the likelihood of the interlocutor raising the topic of K-Pop, and the existence of a shared interest in K-Pop are of concern because they believe that understanding their surroundings is essential for predicting the response they will receive when they disclose their private information.

Petronio (2002, p. 70) The risk-benefit ratio criteria present a risk of stigma related to one's inner content or identity, which, if disclosed, may result in being cornered by others. For informants who have been stigmatised, they admit that they are currently more relaxed about their identity. Nevertheless, they are cognizant that there persists stigmatization towards K-Pop enthusiasts, particularly those who are male, which continues to impede their ability to maintain their identity.

For informants who have experienced stigmatisation, there is an awareness of the risk of stigma due to the current social environment, which still has a negative stigma towards their group. Consequently, the informants appear to place a priori considerations of risk-benefit ratio at the forefront of their decision-making process. Prior to discussing K-Pop with others, informants indicated a desire to ascertain the anticipated response, citing a preference for positive interactions. The informants expressed a desire to avoid negative responses or judgments to the greatest extent possible.

Privacy Boundary Management in K-Pop Fanboys

When the ownership of private information already involves other people, it is necessary that privacy Boundary linkage refers to the process of involving

confidants in the boundaries of the actual owner of private information (Griffin, 2012, p. 175). Informant AV designated his close friends from high school and college as co-owners of his private information. GS places trust in his friends from high school to share private information. VT only involves one of his office friends as a co-owner, as he is a more private informant about his identity than other informants. DB is inclined to divulge information pertaining to his passion to friends and other individuals, as he does not perceive his identity as a fanboy to be a matter of secrecy.

In the context of shared ownership of private information, the establishment of clear boundaries is essential to ensure the protection of individual privacy. Without such boundaries, the risk of collective privacy being breached is high (Petronio, 2002, p. 105). In this study, informants AV, GS and VT acknowledged that they had not established new rules with their co-owners, citing their trust in them as the reason for this.

The subsequent boundary coordination process is that of boundary permeability, which is divided into thick and thin boundaries. This relates to the extent to which privacy boundaries can be penetrated (Griffin, 2012, p. 175). In this research, the informants included in the thick boundaries are AV, GS, and VT because they have disclosure rules and considerations that make it difficult for all parties outside the co-owner to penetrate the privacy boundaries they have set to maintain their identity. In contrast, DB has thin boundaries, as access to information related to his identity is open. This means that DB can easily share any information with other people he chooses.

Informants who exhibit thick boundaries tend to share generalised information, such as the song they are listening to, with a broad audience, while only sharing more detailed K-Pop information, such as current issues, with their co-owners. In the context of social media, GS employs the use of the close friend feature, whereas AV utilises private accounts to regulate access to their private information.

Boundary turbulence occurs when there is a lack of coordination in the implementation of collective

privacy boundaries due to rule violations from other parties. This can be attributed to a lack of consensus or inability to implement the rules (Petronio, 2002, p. 17). With regard to boundary violations in this study, informants AV and GS have never been subjected to such violations. In contrast, VT had previously encountered this issue, but did not implement any adjustments to control the situation because the response from the third party was positive.

The data processing of the interview results revealed that the informants had experienced several forms of verbal stigmatisation, including being labelled as "not masculine", "sissy", "kemayu", "bencong", "kecewek-cewekan", "less male", having a different sexual orientation, and being perceived as "strange". The three informants, AV, GS and VT, have only experienced verbal stigmatisation; they have never been physically assaulted or discriminated against. As a consequence of this experience, the informants decided to exercise greater caution when disclosing information related to their identity as K-Pop fanboys. Consequently, they made the decision to only discuss K-Pop with fellow fans or with close friends with whom they had a pre-existing relationship.

Conclusion:

Information related to the K-Pop fan status of the informant is considered private and must be protected for three informants. The experience of being stigmatised directly and the awareness that there is still stigmatisation in the midst of society affect informants in their perception of their identity and in their decision to protect their identity by considering their surroundings.

In addition, three criteria informants consider in the decision-making process to disclose or hide private information. These are contextual criteria (physical setting and social environment), motivational criteria (relationship closeness motivation and self-clarification), and risk-benefit ratio criteria. These criteria are considered when sharing information related to the informant's identity as a K-Pop fan, with the objective of protecting the informant's

identity and reducing the likelihood of being stigmatised by others.

In an effort to protect private information within the boundaries of privacy, informants establish boundaries with individuals they trust, with whom they discuss more in-depth information related to their privacy. As a consequence of the informant already having established trust with the co-owner, there is no necessity for the informant to impose explicit rules regarding the non-disclosure of private information to third parties.

Furthermore, there is the coordination of access rules to filter which information can be shared and which cannot. Three informants have established rigorous regulations that effectively prevent any unauthorized individuals from breaching the privacy boundaries they have delineated. Only one informant has experienced instances of privacy boundary intrusions. However, efforts to control such intrusions were not made because the response of third parties who had access to their private information was generally positive.

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