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## **STUDY OF PARASOCIAL INTERACTION BETWEEN BANGTAN BOYS (BTS) AND ARMY IN INDONESIA: THE MEANING OF ONE-WAY CLOSENESS BETWEEN FANS AND IDOLS**

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### **Abstract**

The relationship that exists between fans and their idols is considered to have a special meaning. The existence of distance and time makes fans only able to see their idol from television or social media which happened in one direction. The one-way relationship builds parasocial interactions between fans and their idols where fans feel they understand, care, and sense how their idols felt. Parasocial interactions were experienced by fans and their idols, including BTS and their fans called ARMY. This study uses a qualitative method. This research on BTS and ARMY aims to find out what forms of parasocial interaction are carried out by ARMYs with BTS and how ARMYs interpret these interactions. The research was conducted on six participants who are ARMYs. Data collection was conducted by interview and literature study. The study was conducted in Jakarta from March to July 2022. The research was conducted by linking the answers of the informants using Hoffner's four parasocial interaction effects, which are sense of companionship, pseudo-friendship, role models in behavior, and personal identity. Researchers found that the parasocial effect is described as a form of admiration of fans for their idols. Also, ARMY considers that the parasocial interactions that occur with BTS have a positive impact and that positive impact were implemented in everyday life.

**Keywords:** communication; parasocial interaction; media

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The existence of K-Pop or Korean Pop fans has spread to various corners of the world. K-Pop, which once sounded foreign, even often called "alay" fans who have negative connotations, has now become part of pop culture or pop culture worldwide. Technological advancements have also had an influence on the rise of K-Pop fans around the world. One of the influences is the increasing number of social media users so that this facilitates access to information and cultural exchanges from various parts of the world. As a result, people can find it easier to find information about K-Pop and have an interest in it. This interest resulted in a one-way relationship dynamic between fans and idols. The presence of new media also provides dynamics to the form of one-way relationships that exist between fans and idols. In terms of use, new media are more individual than old media. This difference was expressed by McQuail, (2005) who revealed that through the level of interactive media use indicated by the ratio of user response to message senders, the level of user socialization where new media are more individual and not direct social interaction, the level of pleasure and interest of the media used as desired and the high level of privacy for the use of new media. New media encourages community creation and encourages more users so that this one-way relationship can be formed (Webster, 2019).

The occurrence of this one-way relationship dynamic is experienced by many fans who idolize boy groups or girl groups from South Korea. Through their performances and music, these boy groups and girl groups gained tremendous success and popularity, not only in their own country, but also throughout the world including Indonesia. These fans have a community from all over the world commonly called fandom and a huge fanbase. The one-way relationship established between fans and idols through the media, has differences in the past and present eras. In the past, communication technology was not as developed as it is now, so idol interactions with their fans were more carried out directly than through the media. But now, with the development of increasingly advanced technology coupled with the pandemic situation, the use of media has increased, especially the internet. The advantage of the internet is that there are almost no restrictions on space and time so access to obtain information is very easy. This ability to access all forms of information also makes the world between fans and idols even less distant. Fans A and fans B who both idolize the same artist can also easily exchange information even if they come from different countries. Making it possible for artists to be able to have fans in all parts of the world.

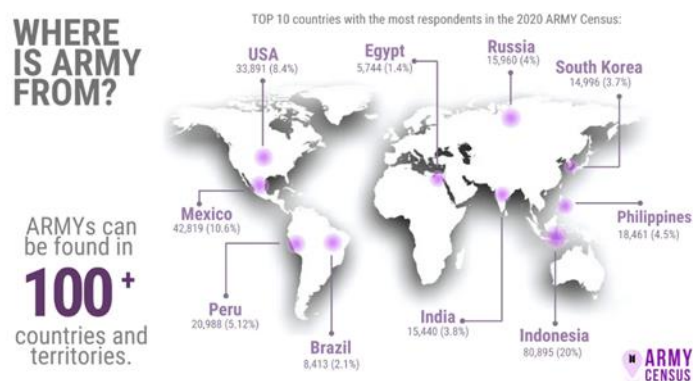
The K-pop artist with the largest number of fans today is BTS who has a fandom under the name ARMY, especially in Indonesia. This is evidenced by the large number of tweets on twitter using #BTS hashtags. Reporting from CNNIndonesia.com on (01/22) #BTS hashtag also became the most used by K-Pop lovers in the country, #EXO and #NCT followed in second and third place at that time. Further in CNNIndonesia, Twitter revealed that in 2021 the conversation about K-Pop again dominated the conversation on Twitter with an increase in the number of tweets globally from 6.7 billion in 2020 to 7.8 billion. This large number makes the quality of the one-way relationship an inevitable new phenomenon at this time.



**Figure 1. Countries with the most K-Pop fans**

As already mentioned that one of the biggest fan members that exists today, is owned by the boy band BTS which has fans called ARMY. Launching from usbtsarmy.com, the name ARMY itself stands for Adorable Representative M.C. For Youth which was formed on July 9, 2013. The number of ARMYs is fairly large and spread all over the world. Indonesia itself is the country with the most number of ARMYs compared to other countries, even in South Korea itself. In the census conducted by btsarmycensus.com in July - September 2020, it shows that Indonesia is ranked first at 80,895 (20%). Mexico placed second 42,819 (10.6%) then USA 33,891 (8.4%), Peru 20,988 (5.12%), Philippines 18,461 (4.5%), Russia 15,960 (4%), India

15,440 (3.8%), South Korea 14,996 (3.7%), Brazil 8,413 (2.1%) and Egypt in tenth place with 5,744 (1.4%).



**Figure 2. Census of ARMYs around the world.**

**Source:**<https://www.btsarmycensus.com/2020-results>

The number of ARMYs in Indonesia is proven by the frequent holding of various activities related to their idol artists. The activities carried out are not only limited to having fun but also have social benefits for many people. Various social activities carried out, always in the name of BTS as their idols. In addition to social activities that are known by many people, not a few ARMYs who make events for BTS that do not care whether it will be known by other BTS members or not, for example fans buy birthday cakes to celebrate the birthday of one of the members and the small event is only done in the room. Each fan has their own level of liking their idol. Fans with a very high level of liking are more likely to change lifestyles and attend or organize special activities or things related to their idol (Thorne & Bruner, 2006). Some things or activities carried out by ARMYs against BTS cause a special interaction called parasocial interaction.

Parasocial interaction is an imaginary interaction between media users and media figures where the audience feels they have a face-to-face relationship with their figures through the media (Horton & Richard Wohl, 1956). Parasocial interaction is an interaction formed between consumers and celebrities through mediated channels (Shoffner, 2019). Parasocial interactions are based on virtual relationships between celebrities and their fans, but these relationships are estimated to be interpersonal relationships that fans consider real (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). In addition, parasocial interaction is also understood as a parasocial process that can take the form of providing attention, understanding, knowledge, evaluation, sympathy, empathy, emotional feelings and being part of fan behavior (Jones, 2013).

The relationship created between ARMY and BTS can be categorized as a parasocial relationship. Army is not really directly related by BTS so the interaction created between the two is parasocial mediated by communication technology. The existence of this parasocial connection makes fans feel compelled to contribute to various activities related to the artist, regardless of whether the activity will be seen by the artist. Samra & Wos, (2014) states that

"fans present informal membership behaviours, such as co-production and investment". A study conducted by Tukachinsky & Sangalang (2016) states that parasocial interaction facilitates communication in a take and give relationship between idols and their fans

Parasocial phenomena are familiar today. Azzahra & Ariana, (2021) research found that one of the parasocial characteristics that emerged was imagined friendship where fans felt similar to their idols. Meanwhile, the factors that influence individuals in parasocial interactions are motivation, identification and similarity or similarity with idols.

Samra & Wos, (2014) mentions that "some media fans as consumers who also produced, such as readers who also wrote, and spectators who also participated". Grossberg in Samra & Samra & Wos, (2014) also discusses "fandom creates something more than consumption of cultural objects and actively produces views on the objects". These various forms of fan involvement then gave rise to a participatory culture among them (Jenol & Pazil, 2020). This participatory culture then gives rise to activities that are initiated, managed and realized together by fellow fan members. This is evidenced by the holding of various social activities on behalf of their fandom, namely ARMY, as well as the name of the idol artist, BTS. According to Hoffner, (2002) the impact of parasocial interaction, namely

1. Sense of companionship. Parasocial relationships can emotionally give the impression of friendship and the individual feels satisfied with his or her needs in social interaction.
2. Pseudo - friendship. Parasocial can lead to a false sense of friendship between individuals and their favorite celebrities. Individuals are as if directly related to their idols, like they are related to friends.
3. Role models in behavior. Individual dependence on media figures will make individuals choose these figures as a reference in behavior so that they can affect individual lives either positively or negatively, depending on the personality of the idol figure.
4. Personal identity is where the audience identifies the situations and behaviors of their favorite figures that are found through the media and the real world to be applied in everyday life. Assisting individuals in finding their identity so that individuals find roles in society.

This study aims to see the dynamics of parasocial interaction, namely various interactions carried out by fan groups (ARMY) towards their idols (BTS). In addition, to see if the treatment carried out by fans falls into the group sense of friendship, pseudo-friendship, role models in behavior, or personal identity. This research focuses on various forms of parasocial interaction between fans and their idols so as to form special interactions in managing a social activity carried out for the sake of their idol even though it is known from the beginning that the activity will not necessarily be attended or even known by the idol. This new phenomenon seems to only be possible for idols who have a very large number of fans spread all over the world such as in the relationship between BTS and ARMY as a fan group, especially in Indonesia.

## **METHOD RESEARCH**

This research is a case study method with a qualitative approach. Qualitative research aims to explain a phenomenon in depth through data collection and does not focus on the size of the population to be studied (Pratomo & Kriyantono, 2016). This type of research is descriptive because this study aims to describe how the process of parasocial interaction that

occurs in BTS fans towards BTS members and the special things that exist in these parasocial interactions.

Based on this, in knowing the parasocial interaction between fans and idols, research was conducted through in-depth interviews with 6 sources who were BTS fans who joined as ARMYs in Jakarta. The criteria for the resource persons are BTS fans who have carried out activities personally or in organizations on behalf of the BTS boyband, and have many fan members and are known for their solidarity among Kpopers. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and observations conducted by researchers. Interviews were conducted with each informant online using an online tool (google meet) with a voice recording device and notes on draft interview questions. In addition, researchers also observed information activities on the source's Instagram social media as well as researchers' direct experiences when participating in various social activities that had been carried out before Covid 19 existed.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Overview of the Research Subject

The study participants consisted of 6 women who had varying ages. All of the speakers are BTS or ARMY fans in Indonesia. An overview of participants can be seen in the following table:

**Table 1.** Participant Overview

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Age (Years)</b>	19	23	24	23	37	29
<b>Status</b>	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Marry
<b>Education</b>	S1	S1	S1	S1	S1	S1
<b>Work</b>	Student	Employee	Employee	Freelancer	Employee	Housewives

### Parasocial Interaction

Parasocial interaction theory is based on virtual relationships between celebrities and their fans, but these relationships are considered real interpersonal relationships by fans (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). Each interviewee had a different response in parasocial interaction. This is influenced by various factors that are the beginning of fans' interest in idols. This parasocial relationship has several impacts, namely, a sense of friendship, pseudo-friendship, role models in behavior and personal identity.

The first speaker (A) was a 19-year-old woman, as a student and domiciled in Jakarta, the subject knew BTS for the first time in 2016, the subject saw the visuals of the BTS boy band then there was a sense of interest that made the subject one of the ARMY members. At that time, the subject confessed that his interest was also supported by the surrounding environment and even made ARMY his second family.

As a fan, the subject was impressed by the two-way interaction created between fans and their idols. The subject gives the impression that the relationship formed between BTS and the Army is a special relationship as quoted from the subject's opinion as follows,

*"They care about their fans, not just support us. support us.. Don't just want that. they (idols) ask to be strengthened, we (fans) also ask to be strengthened by them from their songs that motivate us Army."* (A, personal communication on 04/04/22)

The subject felt that the communication that had been established so far between idols and fans provided an important role that formed strong boundaries with each other. Meanwhile, the subject felt BTS was a public figure who also had a positive impact on his fans. The good behavior in everyday life shown by BTS is an inspiration that can be applied in real life. One of the good behaviors that has been done by the first resource person is to donate Tips for online motorcycle taxis. Tips for online motorcycle taxis is a program formed to appreciate online motorcycle taxis who are willing to join the struggle just to queue for a nugget menu collaboration between MCdonald's and BTS in Indonesia in 2021. The subject reflected on the effects of parasocial interaction through his attention by creating an activity on behalf of BTS members.

The second resource person (B) is a 23-year-old woman, works as a *social media specialist* and is domiciled in Jakarta. The second subject claimed to start being an ARMY in 2020. The thing that attracted him for the first time was when BTS released a song called "Dynamite" and he liked the concept of the song. Although he is fairly new to being an ARMY, he considers that the closeness between ARMY and BTS has an emotional closeness that is honest, trusting, and confiding in each other like friends.

Through various *updates* made by BTS, he feels that BTS often encourages their fans, especially during the pandemic. Explained further by the second speaker as follows,

*"When corona people are going down and down, it's like people adapt to a new life when corona is like that. But there they are like stress too, but they can encourage us to gituloh, like telling us what it is, like this, interrupting corona indeed, but you don't bother like that"* (B, personal communication on 05/04/22)

He also felt that BTS was quite open with its ARMYs. The thing that makes him feel close to BTS is because his songs have lyrics that *relate to* him. In addition, he also felt that BTS and ARMY have the same *inside jokes* and the name ARMY is always mentioned in various activities carried out. Although the subject felt that BTS was too themselves, it became one of the things he disliked.

Through BTS, many things he considers can be used as role models. Some of them are constantly trying, trusting each other, *supporting* each other, *humble*, and always doing good. These good behaviors made him willing to buy a birthday cake when one of the BTS members had a birthday. He said that he felt more *excited about* celebrating BTS members' birthdays than his own because he felt BTS had given a lot of good things in his life so he had to give back.

The good behavior shown by BTS turned out to have a lot of good influence on the interviewees to apply it in real life. One BTS member who loves to cook, inspired the interviewee to make his own food. BTS's *humble* nature makes source B also always polite to

everyone and does not look down on those around him. Speaker B also saw that BTS often shares by doing *charity*, and this also makes him more enthusiastic in terms of sharing. He considers that by being a fan of BTS he is inspired to do good things and can make a change. Being an ARMY and being in that environment also felt that he had more friends and became someone who did not close himself.

The pandemic has affected the interaction between fans and their idols. As an ARMY, Speaker B prefers in-person interaction over *online*. Other things that make him admire BTS is that he likes that BTS is being himself, that's what makes each member have their own impression with their own personality. The interviewee also felt that the bonding between ARMY and BTS is different, he felt BTS understands his ARMYs. Because so far, the agency that oversees BTS has never given any targets to artists or to their fans. It is his ARMY who moves alone to always support BTS from the beginning until now.

Resource person C is a 24-year-old woman, works as a *business analyst* and is domiciled in Jakarta. The third subject had an affinity for BTS around 2020. The thing that attracted him to BTS was through his interviews. He admired the way a member named RM answered questions in English and also the way he handled questions that had elements of racism directed at BTS. The third subject considered that his idol had the same sense of humor as himself and always seemed to be himself.

The form of liking for their idols is illustrated through support, one of which is done by buying various *merchandise* issued by BTS. Speaker C actually confirmed that the purchase of merchandise was a form of *wasting*, but he felt it was okay because this he considered as *wasting* to good things. Considering that BTS are good people, subject three didn't feel afraid to be let down. The third subject further explains that,

*"The way we like to go to Indonesian bands with kpop is different, right. We don't care about the things they do, right, but if we go to kpop, we try so hard, I have to know that he likes to eat all kinds of things, right. Now to be someone like that, I feel like I have to choose the right person so that it can make me feel good."* (C, personal communication on 07/04/22)

Another thing that made him an ARMY is because he feels that the lyrics of BTS's songs relate to his life. That's where he feels that BTS understands the feelings of the younger generation and has sensitivity to social issues and political issues that occur in the world. The third subject once celebrated one of the members' birthday by buying a cake on his birthday as a form of small celebration. Pseudo-friendship was seen in the behaviors performed by the three subjects. He considers that BTS is a close friend so they are willing to buy cakes regardless of whether BTS knows it or not. He thinks BTS has given a lot, and thinks that a small celebration is actually not enough.

Speaker C also admitted that many behaviors of the members can be modeled that can be applied in everyday life in order to motivate him to become a better person. This follows research that states that in general figures who become idols or adore teenagers come from celebrities such as singers, movie stars and sportsmen (Novianti, 2015). The behavior of BTS members that can be exemplified according to source C is as follows: BTS member named Suga for him is someone who is hardworking, a member named Jimin for him is a person who

cares for others, and a member named RM for him is a person who has leadership and good public speaking. These things are what he thinks are good things that can be exemplified.

As a fan, he must be willing to give support to his idol in any form. ARMY is known as a fandom that makes various kinds of activities, be it social activities, gatherings, or birthday celebrations. This resource person was happy with the people who were willing to hold these events. According to him, with ARMYs holding activities on behalf of BTS shows that BTS makes their ARMYs do positive things.

The fourth speaker (D) is a 23-year-old woman, works as a *freelancer* domiciled in Lumajang and is the owner of an ARMY fanbase account, @armybts.lumajang. The fourth subject has been making BTS his idols since 2014 and the first thing that attracted him was their *performance*. Like several other interviewees, the fourth subject sees BTS as idols who they are and different from the others. As a fan, he feels BTS embraces his ARMYs. Usually in BTS is Jimin, because he feels Jimin has a resemblance to himself.

*"Because at the beginning, I just liked it, it's really handsome, it's so cute, oh it turned out to be Suga. Continue to explore the video again see Jimin, Jimin is really good and a bit fat like I am, right. So yaudah likes Jimin because his body is the same as mine,"* (D, personal communication on 05/04/22)

The resemblance that D's source believes to his idol makes him feel a special connection. According to Voderer (in Klimmt, 2006) when observing idols will associate it with feelings related to themselves. Some of BTS's treatments that make him feel that BTS are close to him are when they perform *live* on an app. From the *live*, he felt that he was close and BTS was a real person. In addition, he added that when BTS said some sentences with Indonesian, for example, "Jakarta, thank you".

Resource person D became one of the many ARMYs who held various activities on behalf of BTS. Some of the events he had held were raising donations for the Mount Semeru disaster which at that time collaborated with Lazismu and managed to raise funds worth Rp. 79,000,000 in 1 month. In addition to raising funds, these ARMYs also volunteered in the natural disaster. In addition, in order to celebrate the birthdays of some BTS members, usually he and people who are members of the Lumajang ARMY hold birthday and *anniversary events* at the *café* in which singing and dancing competitions are held. The fourth subject admitted that by seeing BTS doing social activities, it became one of his references to participate in social activities.

The things done by BTS are considered to be a role model in behavior. The fourth subject said that there are behaviors that can be emulated from one of the members named Namjoon or RM, namely his maturity and leadership spirit. Not only Namjoon, but another member named Suga is considered not too concerned if someone else says bad things behind his back. These things are considered to be used as role models in behavior. In addition to role models in behavior, there are habits of BTS members that he now exemplifies and does in real life. One of them is following the favorite foods of one of the *members* named Jin. He also saw Namjoon and V's habit of capturing *aesthetic* photos and he is following it now.

The fifth speaker E is 37 years old and works as a digital anthropologist, digital communication consultant, and graphic recorder from Jakarta. The subject had known BTS



during the 'Love Yourself' era in 2017. At that time the subject got the task to explore the lyrics of the songs in the album 'Love Yourself' and then from there the beginning of the gate to get to know BTS more deeply. The interviewee argued that,

"The song is really good according to the cave, the structure of the song, for example, you or the lyrics, the structure of the song *according to the cave is good, the balance, the structure is clear, surprising, the flow of the song. You know what Namjoon is doing, but yes, he wrote lyrics that mean that, so if you don't learn it, it's weird.*" (E, personal communication on 04/04/22)

The subject confessed that he was not easily attracted to things and long enough to like new things, finally in 2020 the subject realized that he admitted to being an ARMY.

The subject described his admiration for BTS starting from the lyrics on each of their albums. The subject was very impressed with the lyrics written by them, the subject saw that a lot of what BTS conveyed to their fans was not only about romance but about life that could be a motivation for their fans. The subject also admitted that every concept that BTS releases has its own meaning, neatly arranged, so as to produce maximum results to be presented to their fans, BTS also has critical thinking and cares about the environment. The subject admitted that such attitudes are very rarely shown by idols, especially big idols like BTS.

As a fan, the subject has done a project inspired by the good behavior displayed by BTS on behalf of the band BTS. The projects that have been carried out are Bina Ungu, Wings 07 Bangtan, Festapora, Womens Mart, Paud Bintang Ungu, Fundraising, Build an Elderly Home, Share A Meal. Of all the projects mentioned, the subject felt that the subject did it voluntarily and wanted to teach the surrounding environment to participate in doing positive things in their lives.

The sixth speaker F is a mother who is currently 29 years old domiciled in Depok. This sixth subject has known BTS since they first debuted in the entertainment world. The subject admits to having been captivated by the face of a Seok Jin. Seok Jin is one of the members of the band BTS. Shortly after, he moved on to Kim Taehyung. The subject is the founder of one of the ARMY Groups in Indonesia.

The first group he created was ARMY Indonesia and has been running for 2 years. Not only succeeded in creating the Indonesian ARMY group, the subject has also done many projects on behalf of the BTS group, one of the projects he has successfully made is making donations with Kitabisa.com to help tumor diseases. The donation project managed to get Rp. 8,400,000-, and there are many more donation projects that he has successfully done.

As a fan, the subject admitted that he was influenced by the idol's good behavior. The subjects were so impressed with the good behavior they showed that it moved the subject's heart and was able to follow positive things, not only making a group for fun but also still being able to help each other. In addition to BTS's good behavior, the subjects were also impressed by the spontaneous actions they showed to the media, making the subjects feel that BTS's presence felt real just like humans in general. Excerpted from interviews with subjects as follows;

"Because we see their behavior, we will follow from the BTS run their *behavior is crazy, so we don't just see during the concert, we see their daily lives from the BTS run or from them when they are live. It's not just their liking from the visuals but their behavior that makes us the tablets we must follow*" (F, personal communication on 04/04/22)

One of the subjects' motivations for doing the project is to be perceived by the biased subject or even all BTS members. The subject hopes that by doing a donation project or a member's birthday project can be seen by BTS, and it makes the subject feel motivated to do more to get attention from BTS, quoted from the interview with the sixth subject as follows;

*"That's why I am doing the project now, I hope they want to be noticed on the Weverse or on Twitter or Instagram, now they already have Instagram, right? So now we're posting on Instagram"* (F, personal communication on 04/04/22)

From the various activities that have been carried out, the subject considers that all activities are natural to do and have a very positive impact on the environment so that the subject invites the environment to compete to do positive things as well.

There are 4 main reasons someone becomes a K-Pop fan, namely, *visual idols*, idol music, idol stage performance and *idol attitude* (Dewi & Indrawati, 2019). Starting from this sense of attraction, parasocial interactions are formed between idols and their fans. As Hofner (2002) said that there are 4 things that are the impact of parasocial interaction, namely sense of companionship, pseudo-friendship, role models in behavior, and personal identity.

### **Sense of Companionship**

Sense of Companionship gives the impression of friendship between artists and their fans. This impression of friendship is felt by ARMYs towards BTS because they feel that BTS always appears as it is so that what is displayed is not something fake so that the impression of friendship can be established. Speaker C said that

*"Their jokes are like joking with brothers and sisters just playing like that. For example, if again in RUN BTS it's really different, it's really funny and it's not made up. I feel like they are themselves,"* (C, personal communication on 07/04/22)

This was also felt by Speaker D who argued that

*"The first time I felt they were what they were, sis. Usually, idols are restrained by agencies and jaim, but if I look at their BTS for what they are, it's friendly, brother, so it's like everyone embraces. Wow this is really different so I like it,"* (D, personal communication on 05/04/22)

Then small things that give the impression of friendship are also done by BTS and felt by Speaker E. Interviewee. Speakers feel always involved in every activity carried out by BTS boy bands such as,

*"Usually people just call fans "thank my fans" even if they want, every time they win something they always say "this is what the army wins". always include Army & they are quick for Vlive. So we're kind of celebrating together, I think it's a good culture."* (D, personal communication on 05/04/22)

### **Pseudo - friendship**

In pseudo-friendship, ARMYs feel that their relationship with BTS is very close, more than just ordinary friends, like friends. Interviewee A admitted that he felt a special closeness when BTS interacted with the ARMYs during concerts or live fan meetings. Speaker A said that,

*"ARMYs as a whole feel like they're going to be very close to BTS when they go to concert, even though maybe I don't feel that way yet. I think it's really hard that they have a habit of eating all the soldiers from afar, that's them staring at everyone if they can look at them one-on-one so it feels intimate"* (A, personal communication on 04/04/22)

Interviewees B and C felt this moment because the songs made by BTS could be very related to their lives. Speaker B said that,

*"The one that was really affected by the mixtape was suga, I read the lyrics from the first mixtape to the last one I felt really like the change, like the self-development there continues to be a part where the cave feels really related,"* (B, personal communication on 05/04/22)

Speaker C also stated the same thing.

*"It's precisely from the song that I feel like I'm deket. I really like RM's album and SUGA's album. I heard the mono album (BTS Album Name) that the song makes us sad,"* (C, personal communication on 07/04/22)

Source E opined that BTS can always convey their messages well, always have their own way of being able to communicate with their fans, source E said that,

*"A person's success is supported by many things, one of which is supported by fans. BTS always communicates that, acts on each other's roles, can criticize their ARMYs and it's rare that the form of communication is 2-way"* (E, personal communication on 04/04/22)

Speaker F also felt the same as the three speakers above, however, he said that the closeness that exists between ARMY and the BTS boyband is like friends who can be a fortress for each other. Speaker F argues that,

*"It's really paying attention. BTS loves ARMY, ARMY also loves bangtan (BTS). Anyway, I don't want to see ARMY in anything, even if the bangtan (BTS) is always advancing and even if the bangtan (BTS) is in anything. If there is any conflict, surely the ARMY will immediately make its own ocean."* (F, personal communication on 04/04/22)

### **Role models in behavior**

Behavior or behavior carried out by a public figure is often exposed by the media, because of this fans can find out various idol behaviors both good behavior and bad behavior. As an ARMY, the source said that by idolizing BTS, many behaviors can be used as role models. Interviewee (B) argues about what kind of behavior he or she exemplified,

*"The hard work is like that. Continue to believe in each other in the team, support each other, continue to stay humble with others. So even if it's like it's low, they don't fight it either using a song or just using an award, it's more like that"* (B, personal communication on 05/04/22)

Then Speaker C explained what kind of behavior some BTS *members* can be emulated from each.

*"Seven people are different, sis, for example, rich SUGA is a hard worker, then RM thinks the way he holds back his emotions. It's really rich, because I'm a pretty short-fuse person. So I think from the 7 they have a good impact, which I can follow."* (C, personal communication on 07/04/22)

The things mentioned by Speaker C show that there is an effect of interaction

The high parasocial makes fans seem to really recognize and understand his idol. As said by Klimmt (2006) that fans with high intensity of parasocial interaction will understand and think about the activities carried out by idols.

The same thing was also conveyed by Speaker D that the behavior of BTS that can be used as a role model comes from one of the members named RM. He saw that RM had a decisive and mature leader.

The number of positive behaviors that are often exposed by the media makes Speaker F participate in doing good, Speaker F admitted that the BTS boyband provides examples that can be implemented in everyday life from small to big things though. Speaker F said that,

*"They often do good things like that, so I have to follow them. It's not just about creating a group for fun, but if you can help others."* (F, personal communication on 04/04/22)

### **Personal Identity**

Personal identity discusses the behavior or behavior of idols that fans see through the media. The frequency of how often fans watch the idol also influences. The more behavior of the idol that fans see and can be modeled, the more examples of actions that can be used as a reference.

Sources B, C, and D admitted that the frequency with which they watch BTS is very frequent. Every day there must be content that they watch either on social media such as Instagram and Twitter, or through YouTube. Speaker B admitted that he preferred BTS's content displayed on Twitter.

*"It's the same as twitter, it's more twitter, actually, on twitter, sometimes we like to be funnier, like there are fun facts that we used before. If Instagram doesn't update their visual content more,"* (B, personal communication on 05/04/22)

Speaker C explained how often he watched BTS content.

*"Hmmm, lately, I rarely open Weverse anymore. Actually, last year I was very often like this, brother, but this year the work has started a lot, at most around 8 pm until I just opened Instagram, but every day sis."* (c, personal communication on 07/04/22)

This was also felt by Speaker D who said that he could access BTS content every hour or even every second, especially when he was in junior high school. When fans have *repeated interactions*, as Weaver, (1993) said, these interactions will encourage closer feelings for each individual (Sagita & Kadewardana, 2017). In addition, Baumeister and Leary in Asriana & Ratnasari, (2012) also revealed that a person needs intense and pleasant interactions with people he likes so it can be said that the more often the person sees someone who is idolized, the more he will increase his admiration for the idol.

## CONCLUSION

From the results of research and discussion that has been described that parasocial interaction from interviews with six speakers, the parasocial effect is described as a form of admiration between fans and their idols. Each speaker has their own way of expressing admiration. The form of parasocial interaction that occurs between ARMY and BTS produces a positive impact. The interview results show that ARMY considers BTS to have a positive influence so that it can be implemented in everyday life. Not a few sources admitted that BTS's song lyrics inspire and help ARMYs in a state of sadness and even despair. BTS's behavior displayed in the media is often a role model for ARMYs, for example in terms of sharing with others. Being an ARMY, makes them feel like discovering a new world that makes them find their identity that they did not find before. They realize that parasocial interactions with BTS give rise to new habits, create new relationships, new environments.

Previous studies have said that parasocial interactions are imaginary, but ARMYs think that their relationship with BTS has something special. Without realizing it, ARMY is willing to do anything to keep supporting BTS. ARMYs realize that the relationship with BTS is the effect of parasocial interaction, but ARMYs still do this because they feel that BTS has done a lot of good things for their ARMYs.

The pandemic situation does not make BTS and ARMYs more distant due to reduced in-person interaction, instead the one-way relationship that occurs through the media can make ARMYs feel closer to BTS and vice versa.

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