

K-Pop Fans, Climate Activism, and Participatory Culture in the New Media Era

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Abstract

Due to social media, K-pop fans are now recognized as a significant force in the field of activism, who have been outspoken on social media, in this case, Twitter, about their concerns regarding various social issues. KPOP 4 Planet, a digital movement that advocates for climate justice, serves as a notable example. Using Twitter, KPOP 4 Planet has been bringing the attention of the public to their environmental advocacies, notably those concerning climate activism. KPOP 4 Planet clearly promotes participatory culture in which K-pop fans work collaboratively for consciousness-raising and activism around issues involving climate change in the era of new media. Discussed is the dynamic interplay of social media, fandom, and activism in order to show how participatory culture develops in the phenomenon of fan activism. The paper argues that the shared interest in K-pop, creation of a safe community on Twitter, utilization of Twitter for climate advocacy, and development of strong solidarity among the members, have helped K-pop fandoms to actively engage in activism. Together, the K-pop fandom and the development of new media technologies have helped K-pop fans to collaborate and promote climate activism, a phenomenon that has been especially true to the case of KPOP 4 Planet.

Keywords

K-pop, fan activism, environmental activism, and participatory culture

Introduction

The audience has always played a crucial role in making entertainment sector products more well-known. The public enjoys a wide range of entertainment sector products through the mass media, including films, music, novels, TV shows, and many others. While serving as the recipients of the goods, the audience also actively participates in their consumption. In this way, audience members' use of media is likewise influenced by the objectives and requirements of each individual (West and Turner).

Additionally, the audience freely chooses the various forms of media, and it is their choice to do so (Sullivan; ch. 6). Some audience members may have formed a relationship with and a shared interest in the products of, say, the entertainment business since they are free to choose their media preferences based on their wants and aspirations. When a member of the audience forms a deep emotional and intellectual attachment to a certain entertainment industry product, they have become a fan (Jenkins, *Textual Poachers* 9–50).

Being a fan entails demonstrating one's adoration and devotion for the creations of the entertainment business by learning more about, analyzing, and debating their favorite items with other fans (Sullivan). Not only that, viewers also take part in creating their own works that draw inspiration from their preferred entertainment sector products (Smutradontri and Gadavani 10), like fan writing, fan art, and numerous more forms. Through the common experiences that fans have, they forge an identity based on their preferred entertainment industry goods (Cheung 34–95).

Fans frequently use their unique identities to set themselves apart from the general media audience (Smutradontri and Gadavani 10–11). Fans are free to choose whether to reveal their fandom when establishing their identity. On the one hand, some fans make an effort to conceal their fandom in public while yet remaining devoted to their idols in private. Others, on the other hand, simply do not hesitate to identify as fans (Cheung 64–90).

K-pop fandoms have shown abilities in uniting their force and cooperating to address public problems in the real world, apart from their objects of adorations. These actions range from taking part in efforts to fight

racial inequality in the United States to using social media to start campaigns to save forests and the global actions against climate change (Yi).

Nowadays, many of the followers have evolved into progressive people, and a group has emerged. Fans from all over the world may now easily connect and communicate with one another without worrying about their location or time differences; thanks to social media (Nożewski and Trzcińska 16–17). Additionally, through interaction, knowledge sharing, and collaboration, social media helps fans to create deep social bonds with other fans (Morrison). This happened, especially among those who have an interest in other issues beside the interest in common objects of adoration. K-pop fandom become the pinnacle of fan activism. As Lichey stated, once the object of fandom offers support for a cause, it becomes possible for fans, journalists, and scholars to label it “fandom activism” (1). Since social media allows fans to access a wider audience and fortifies their sense of community, they are more inclined to participate in activism (Chang and Park 269). The K-pop fandom is sometimes viewed negatively since most people associate them with being zealots (Kim and Chung). Additionally, there are also bad fan practices among the K-pop fanbase (Ganghariya and Kanozia 341). Negative fan practices which identified as toxic fandom with negative practices from fans, as can be seen from the fan wars.

Social media has an important part in the way fan activism works in the digital era, as fans become more motivated to participate in activism because of the presence of their idols. Celebrities’ interactions with their fans through social media create a sense of intimacy for fans (Beer 222–41; Burns; Muntean and Peterson) and strengthen the practice of fan-initiated participatory culture. On the other hand, fans are often actively engaged in activism even before their idols advocate it (Lynch).

KPOP 4 Planet is one example of fandom activism. It is a virtual community of activists who are concerned with various social issues and are also part of K-pop fandoms. This virtual community gathers together to voice their aspirations regardless of fandom membership. KPOP 4 Planet uses Twitter as the main media to share ideas, criticism, and concerns regarding issues

such as racism, political turmoil, climate change, and COVID-19 handling. One of the biggest initiatives that KPOP 4 Planet has done is climate activism.

Fan activism and the power to drive social actions through various channels reflect the practice of participatory culture. This paper mainly focuses on analyzing how KPOP 4 Planet, as a fandom community, collaborates in fan activism as participatory culture. Specifically, this paper pays attention to the importance of responding to the growing need for more responsible fandoms, the influence of the celebrities that they support, and the way fans use social media, especially Twitter.

Fandom Activism in Social Media

The word *fan*, an abbreviation of the word *fanatics*, has been used since the nineteenth century (Busse 385). Fans have been an interesting subject of research and studies for more than two decades. Lately, with the growing of new media technology and the usage of social media among fandoms, the study has developed an interesting direction.

The ability of social media to create networked publics has motivated fans to make extensive use of social media by actively participating in voicing their concerns about social and political issues (Click et al. 608–10; Brough and Shresthova). This aspect of fandom is commonly referred to as fan activism. Fan activism is defined as a situation in which fans work together to effect change by utilizing their favorite popular culture topic (Brough and Shresthova). Understanding of this aspect is very relevant to the idea that, according to John Lie, social media is known for its ability to market products. In this case, the product is not only K-pop idols or fandom but also ideas and social movement (119).

For example, in the early second quarter of 2020, the global online K-pop fandom joined the #BlackLivesMatter movement. As a movement born in the United States, K-Pop fans actively participated by spamming tweets with the hashtags #BlueLivesMatter, #AllLivesMatter, and #WhiteLivesMatter with K-pop-related content. This effort was made to bury sensitive tweets associated with the three provocative and contentious hashtags (Reddy). Aside from that, “One in an ARMY,” a BTS fandom that

specializes in fundraising, created the #MatchAMillion fundraising initiative for the #BlackLivesMatter movement. According to *Time*, the BTS ARMY has successfully raised more than \$1 million through the #MatchAMillion campaign (Bruner).

Abercrombie and Longhurst, in their research about sports fans, suggest that audience research supposed to be seen in three paradigms, first through a “behavioural paradigm” that covers much of the psychological theories of audiences and some in the early sociological area (10–15). Second is the “incorporation/resistance paradigm,” in which the audience becomes more active in consuming the message conveyed by the mass media (15–37). Finally, the third paradigm is about “spectacle/performance,” which emphasizes the development of contemporary audiences (159–79). In this case, we refer to the second and third paradigms, with social media as the main media used by the millennials and Gen Z nowadays and as audiences, they are transforming themselves from being passive receivers into becoming active ones.

K-pop fans, which are predominantly composed of millennials and Gen Z generation, use social media as the main platform to express their fan activism. Through social media, K-pop fans from all over the world are recognized as active content producers and creators (Jenol) as social media’s main characteristic is *produsage* (production and use). Such contents produced by K-pop fans include hosting a charity event, a crowdfunding initiative, creating a social campaign, as well as starting hashtag activism.

Social media is one of the new media platforms that has played a major role in K-pop phenomenon. Social media is referred to as “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content” (Kaplan and Haenlein 61). Additionally, Belch and Belch describe social media as “online means of communication and interactions among people that are used to create, share, and exchange content such as information, insights, experiences, perspectives, and even media themselves” (22).

Social media has an important part in the way fan activism works in the digital era, as fans become more motivated to participate in activism because

of the presence of their idols. It is said that the online interactions provided by celebrities on social media towards their fans create a sense of intimacy for the fans (Beer 222–41; Burns; Muntean and Peterson), strengthen the practice of participatory culture initiated by the fans.

Participatory Culture

Indeed, many of them become fan activists. Fan activism, according to Brough and Shresthova, is the situation in which fans as a collective try to seek change by utilizing their favourite popular culture topic. Moreover, according to Bennett, fan activism comes as a platform for social mobilization that is empowered through fan networks. Fan activism can be defined as follows: “[f]orms of civic engagement and political participation emerge from within fan culture itself, frequently in response to shared fan interests, carried out through the infrastructure of existing fan practices and relationships, and frequently framed through metaphors drawn from popular and participatory culture.” (Jenkins, “Cultural Acupuncture”; par. 10).

Participatory culture not only focuses on how people can become a prosumer, but it also explains on how people can work collaboratively and create a community in the digital era. As Jenkins et al., argue that participatory culture has shifted from “an individual expression to community involvement” (Jenkins et al., *Confronting* 6). Flew later added that by actively participating on the content, people started to build communities and construct their practices.

Participatory culture can come in various ways, according to Jenkins et al. in their book *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century: Affiliations, Expression, Collaborative Problem Solving and Circulations*. One of the clearest manifestations of participatory culture is fandom. Jenkins believes that the core feature of fandom is their “ability to transform personal reaction into social interaction, spectatorial culture into participatory culture” (*Fans* 41). Likewise, he explains the ability of fandom to treat media consumption as a way to create new texts, a new culture, and a new community (*Textual Poachers* 46). Therefore, since fans are shifting their role as media producers that work collectively and creatively,

they also make use of the Internet to exhibit their intelligence as a collective, to the extent of searching for information, expressing their opposition, organizing events, and convincing people swiftly and with influence (Duffett 251).

K-pop fandoms have engaged in various forms of activism. They have participated in social movements that address racial injustice in the United States, and have actively supported forest-saving petitions on social media (Yi). The world is stunned by their works on activism because they work collaboratively to publicly address real-world issues. Therefore, consuming K-pop is an active cultural practice, so fan activism has become an important part of fandom culture (Kim 7).

Tim O'Reilly indicated that Web 2.0 generates the "architecture of participation," which later became the basis of social media. With social media, users are actively involved in producing and sharing the media content, resulting in a kind of participatory culture, a concept that Henry Jenkins introduced first.

Meanwhile, Fuchs asserts that participatory culture is "the involvement of users, audiences, consumers, and fans in the creation of culture and content" (52). Meanwhile, Henry Jenkins et al. characterize participatory culture this way:

a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices. A participatory culture is also one in which members believe their contributions matter and feel some degree of social connection with one another (at the least they care what other people think about what they have created. (*Participatory Culture* 4)

From both definitions, it may be inferred that participatory culture was created due to the emergence of Web 2.0, that allowed people to act as both producers and consumers of media content (Jenkins et al., *Confronting* 6). Therefore, the content that are circulating on the internet are often known as user-generated content (UGC) (Flew), enabling the emergence of a kind of participatory culture.

As Twitter becomes the most popular platform for K-pop fans, many of them use this platform to participate in climate activism. For instance, “Blink Official Indonesia,” a BLACKPINK fandom based in Indonesia, utilizes Twitter to broadcast their mangrove planting project, in support of BLACKPINK’s appointment as the goodwill ambassadors for the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (UN COP26). Blink Official Indonesia, in collaboration with EcoNusa Foundation, planted 2,850 mangroves in Jakarta and Raja Ampat. An administrator of Blink Official Indonesia, Jevon Christian, believes that the issues linked to the climate crisis, such as biodiversity extinction and ecosystem degradation, might affect Indonesia’s tourism as the country itself is popularly known for its natural resources (Putra). Stefanus Simarmata, a member of Blink Official Indonesia, later added that he was motivated to participate in this project in order to be a part of the collective activities for the mitigation of the climate crisis. He has also previously participated in other climate action activities conducted on his campus (Putra).

Informants of this research said that their interest toward the issues of climate change either had developed even before they became K-pop fans or emerged through becoming involved with K-pop fans’ activities on social media. The first informant, “NS,” reflects on her awareness of the climate crisis. Her position as a climate activist has made her more aware of every issue regarding the causes, and the campaign of K-pop idols in voicing about climate change has also caught her attention. She saw that her interest in climate issues and K-pop fandom can go together:

So actually, these are two things that are not connected at all. First, I’m really active in the climate, then second, I also like K-pop, and it never occurred to me that we could combine these two things. At first, I worked as an intern at an Indonesian NGO, 350.org, focusing on climate issues. From that moment on, then I like to observe climate issues and become an activist, I continue to participate in the *Pause for Climate, Extinction Rebellion* (notes: special events for climate issues in Indonesia) and help other friends as well. When I saw BLACKPINK appear (with the campaign about climate awareness), I saw that we could combine these two things . . . which (actually) didn’t connect with each other, K-pop and climate action. From

there, we think we can form KPOP 4 Planet as a bridge between K-pop-fan friends to discuss climate action together. (“NS”)

McQuail mentioned that fandom is a phenomenon stimulated in response to media celebrities, implying a strong attachment to and involvement in the accomplishments and personal lives of the idols. Relating to the statement by McQuail, if we observe the actions done by the informants are relevant to the idol, even though they have become activists first before fans.

The second informant, “XG,” has quite the same story about his journey in coordinating and administering the platform KPOP 4 Planet. First, he has been a climate activist with the nongovernment organization (NGO), Youth Advocates for Climate Action Philippines (YACAP) for some time. He eventually wanted to be involved with K-pop fans since he is also a fan of the South Korean boy band, Stray Kids:

I’m a climate activist first before I’m a K-pop fan. I’ve been a climate activist since 2019, and I became a K-pop fan like late last year. So, yes, my climate activist side came first and being a K-pop fan second, and then I saw KPOP 4 Planet has both of them together. So, in 2021, I worked with KPOP 4 Planet. (“XG”)

Combining the power of the K-pop fandom and the ability of social media in reaching people across nations and different backgrounds is a point of discussion in order to empower people to voice out the importance of attending to climate issues. Both informants from KPOP 4 Planet confirmed the idea of combining the ideas of fandom and fighting against climate change into a campaign that covers larger audiences and has a bigger impact. Therefore, the informants, who are aware of the power of fandom in moving the power of the masses, are clearly using social media platforms to enhance the effect and voice concerning climate issues. This point can be concluded from the statements:

So, when it comes to KPOP 4 Planet, we first saw the enthusiasm of K-pop fans after they saw the video of BLACKPINK at COP26. Then we saw them start raising the hashtag #ClimateActionInYourArea. From there, we thought that we could invite K-pop fans to take part in the movement.

Finally, in January we start to test the market. We create content, then we create a KPOP 4 Planet account to try it out, and finally, we see that the response from our friends is positive. From there, in March we finally officially formed as one platform, a global platform for K-poppers friends, umm, to take part in the movement. (“NS”)

Technically, it’s already been set up when I entered. But, from what I know and how it actually started, because you know we have all these fandoms already, that’s quite organized. They are already a big force that’s already doing things, they are all talking about all these things. So, why not combine the power of K-pop fans with the advocacy of the climate? Like saving the planet, and everything. And that’s how KPOP 4 Planet [was] born. Like, let’s use the power of K-pop fans um . . . to advocate for climate justice against climate change. And the mindset behind this is that there is no K-pop on a dead planet. Even [though] we are all K-pop fans, we could enjoy K-pop right now So, yeah let’s all work together, with K-pop fans, with the entertainment companies, with the K-pop groups. Let’s try to get everyone on board because there is no K-pop on a dead planet. (“XG”)

Twitter and the K-pop Fandom

Twitter is a popular social media service and networking site for K-pop fans to express their activism. Twitter is well-known among online fandoms for its ability to influence the masses, as it allows users to exchange real-time information in real-life situations (Benhabib; Castells 23–227; Becker et al. 438–41). Twitter, moreover, has become a medium that facilitates a networked public sphere and enhances global networking among its users (Bruns et al. 283–85; Benhabib).

Twitter is a real-time, free microblogging service for internet users. The platform allows its users to post tweets, which refer to brief messages with a maximum of 280 characters and may contain photos, videos, links, text, and hashtags (Zgoda and Shane 75). Lately, Twitter has become a popular platform for social activism in various forms, and it has been used by many movements globally.

O’Reilly and Milstein claim that Twitter has even become the main platform for facilitating various fundraising events because of its extensive reach that boosts awareness about events, personalities, issues, and so on

(O'Reilly and Milstein 171). In fact, one of the popular forms of activism found on Twitter is hashtag activism. According to Yang, hashtag activism is a “discursive protest on social media united through a hashtagged word, phrase or sentence” (13).

Ofori-Parku and Moscato believe that hashtag activism may function as a social mobilizer, whether it takes place online or offline (Ofori-Parku and Moscato 2480). Examples of hashtag activism are #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo campaigns that became famous both in the online and offline worlds. According to both key informants, the organizers are actively involved in planning the campaigns and creating the content in order to make the effect of voicing the concerns. According to informant “XG,” there are two types of content—“planned” and “calendar-based.” He explains:

There are planned contents, and there are also adjustable contents. So, the planned contents are more of what are the campaigns that we are bringing, like for example, we are talking about K-pop on a dead No K-pop on a Dead Planet, when do we want to post this certain *noise*, or to post this video, or topic or whatever. And then the adjustable . . . wait, I don't think “adjustable” is the right word. But um . . . Calendar-based. I . . . I . . . think that's better. Yeah, it's actually based on the calendar of the K-pop world. When there's comeback happening on this month, we put that in our calendar as well, and then we use, you know, we try to get content from that . . . like if the music video shows windmills, or solar solar panels, we can be like “Oh look! This certain group is advocating for renewable energy.” Yeah, it's those things that you try to do as well. Make sure that we are still in line with the K-pop calendar...and adjust with the calendar” (“XG”; emphasis added)

In short, we can conclude that in creating content for Twitter regarding fan activism on climate issues, informants confirmed that it needs to go well together for both online and offline campaigns. This is especially relevant when the fandom wants to reach its highest impact in campaigning for social causes as it did regarding climate issues.

KPOP 4 Planet is a K-pop fandom that uses Twitter for climate activism. It was founded by various K-pop fandoms. Its Twitter account allows the organization to educate other K-pop fans about the climate crisis by sharing

relevant information, with the aim of uniting other K-pop fans and urging them to participate in raising consciousness about and finding solutions to the climate crisis. To begin with, KPOP 4 Planet's presence on Twitter has transformed the fandom into a platform for K-pop fans from all over the world to connect, collaborate, and share their concerns about the issue.

In the age of new media, KPOP 4 Planet represents fan activism as a form of participatory culture. Participatory culture is a concept that emphasizes how internet users are both consumers and producers of content, transforming the internet into a place filled with user-generated content (UGC) (Jenkins et al., *Confronting* 8; Flew). As a result, KPOP 4 Planet is an excellent choice for better understanding how K-pop fans can and do collaborate in their climate activism in the age of new media.

KPOP 4 Planet

KPOP 4 Planet was launched on March 3, 2021, the exact same date as World Wildlife Day. KPOP 4 Planet serves as a platform for providing information to global K-pop fans on the importance of fighting the climate crisis and hoping that in the end, they will participate in fighting for the cause as well (Ko). KPOP 4 Planet itself is a global digital movement in which its organized members come from various parts of the world, including Indonesia, South Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, the United States, and Canada (Sarifah, personal communication, September 27, 2021).

Recently, KPOP 4 Planet has expanded its membership by creating a program called "KPOP 4 Planet Ambassadors 2021." This program is intended for K-pop fans globally regardless of their specific fandom, to become an ambassador that will help KPOP 4 Planet in raising awareness of people about the climate crisis, to be part of the digital movement itself, and to urge fellow K-pop fans to be active in promoting the cause in their social media accounts. So far, the participants of this program have come from different parts of the globe, including India, Portugal, Argentina, and others (Sarifah).

As a digital movement, KPOP 4 Planet has built up its online presence through various popular online platforms, including Twitter (@kpop4planet),

Instagram (@kpop4planet), Facebook (@Kpop4Planet), YouTube (KPOP 4 PLANET), as well as launched its own website (www.kpop4planet.com). According to an interview with Sarifah on September 22, 2021, out of all their online platforms, Twitter and Instagram are the most active ones. However, Twitter receives the most interactions among its followers. Even though KPOP 4 Planet is known to be a new digital movement, it has been open to the traditional media. International media, such as the *Korea Times*, *Rolling Stone Brazil*, *South China Morning Post*, and others, have published articles concerning KPOP 4 Planet's activism in relation to the climate crisis, as can be shown by the figure below. The article published by the *Korea Times* mainly talks about KPOP 4 Planet as a fan-driven platform that talks about climate action as well as a medium for global K-pop fans to learn and be a part of climate action (Ko).

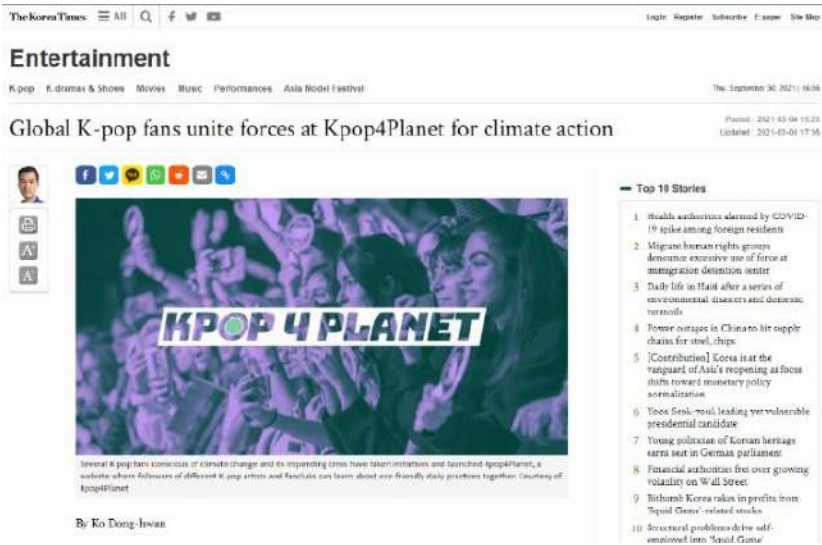


Fig. 1. KPOP 4 Planet Article Published by The Korea Times. Source: (Ko).

KPOP 4 Planet also has had a Twitter account, with the username @kpop4planet, since December 2020. Although KPOP 4 Planet was officially launched in March 2021, the Twitter account had already been created approximately two months earlier because the organizers had wanted to understand the type of content that could best align with the interest of K-pop fans on Twitter (Sarifah, interview, September 27, 2021). By September 30, 2021, @kpop4planet already had 800+ followers with 2500 + tweets that were posted on its Twitter account.

KPOP 4 Planet was able to educate other K-pop fans by creating a Twitter account on issues relating to the climate crisis and the environment. There are a lot of important climate- and environment-related topics that have been shared on KPOP 4 Planet's Twitter account, like the harmful effects of deforestation on animals' habitats, the impact of bulk-buying albums on the environment, important information about carbon footprint, RE100 campaign, the harmful effects of air pollution on people's health, the impact of buying physical CDs on the environment, and many others. Below is an example of such shared posts.

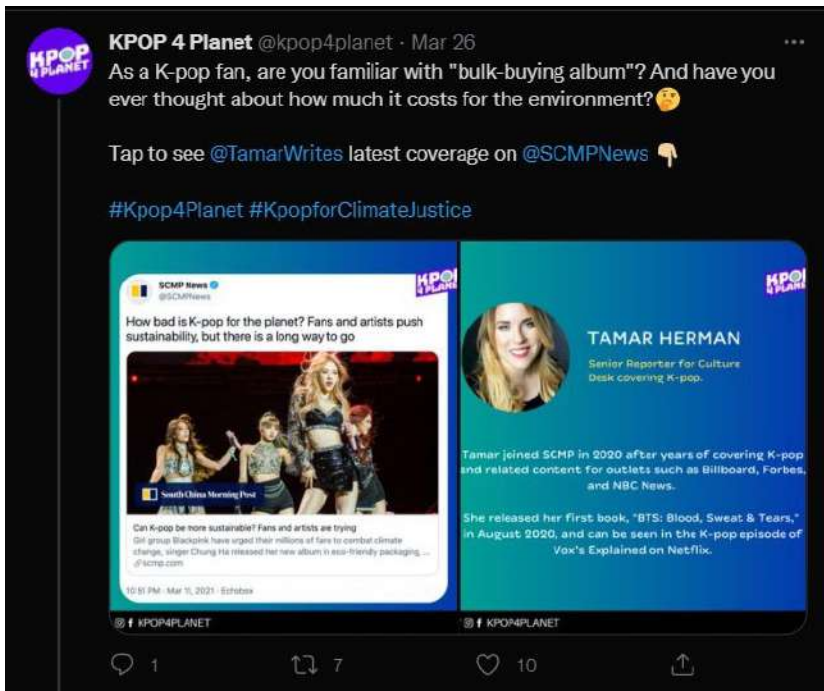


Fig. 2. @kpop4planet Post on Bulk-Buying Album. Source: (KPOP 4 Planet, “As a K-pop fan . . .” 2021a).

As a digital movement, KPOP 4 Planet tends to include other K-pop fandoms on their causes by working collaboratively with them. For instance, KPOP 4 Planet in collaboration with @elfindonesia created a fundraising webinar with the theme “Elf Peduli Sampah & Krisis Iklim,” or in English, “Elf Cares About Trash and the Climate Crisis.” All proceeds from the webinar went to tree donations in commemorating National Garbage Day.

KPOP 4 Planet members have also sponsored their own projects. Their projects are varied in forms, starting from campaigns, events, giveaways, and petitions. Ever since KPOP 4 Planet was launched, they have created so far three main campaigns. These three campaigns are also publicized on their Twitter account. The three campaigns include #Tokopedia4Bumi, #NoKPOPOnADeadPlanet, and #ButterBeach in collaboration with Korea Beyond Coal (Sarifah, interview, October 29, 2021).

#Tokopedia4Bumi was the first campaign initiated by KPOP 4 Planet. A petition urging K-pop fans to sign it, KPOP 4 Planet is asking Indonesia's top e-commerce company, Tokopedia, to undertake the following: work toward 100% renewable energy for its electricity by 2030 and become a model for other tech companies to follow, by revealing to the public their carbon footprint, as well as drawing up a long-term plan for decarbonization that is based on international standards.

The reason why KPOP 4 Planet picked Tokopedia to be a part of this campaign is because Tokopedia often works with K-pop groups, such as BTS and BLACKPINK as their global ambassador. The reasoning is this: As the fans support their idols, KPOP 4 Planet also wants the companies that work with their idols to care about the planet and support renewable energy (*KPOP4PLANET DEBUTS ITS FIRST CAMPAIGN #TOKOPEDIA4BUMI*, 2021). As of October 3, 2021, 2086 K-pop fans had signed the petition, already exceeding the target of 2,030 signatures.

In an interview with *Sindonews.com* on April 21, 2021, one of the leaders from KPOP 4 Planet who happened to be one of the key informants in this research, mentioned that "As Tokopedia has succeeded in developing its business by cooperating with K-pop stars. Therefore, they hope that it will also act like our idol and influence positive changes in the world by using renewable energy."

As a digital movement that has a global reach, KPOP 4 Planet formed its own organizing team, consisting of four members that come from different countries, namely, Indonesia, South Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand (Sarifah, interview, November 20, 2021). The organizer's main responsibility is to manage KPOP 4 Planet's social media accounts, and in uploading two to three contents per week.

They are also responsible for fan and fanbase engagement, building communications with fans' personal accounts and fanbases by sending and replying to direct messages (Sarifah, interview, October 12, 2021). Apart from handling KPOP 4 Planet's social media accounts, they also collaborate with K-pop fanbases, organization, and movements from their own regions (Sarifah, interview, November 20, 2021). This is proven by how KPOP 4 Planet

gathers its strength and abilities to work together and make the campaign for building climate change into real action:

We always work together when it comes to “on-site” movement . . . just like when we did the tree donations for *Save Papua Forest*, since our places were geographically dispersed, so it was impossible to move by ourselves to go to Papua . . . so we . . . coordinated with local communities who engaged in preserving natural environment, we collect money and send the funds to the local communities which we trust. Therefore we can sure that the activities would happened, they worked well with the local government, so the local communities were the ones who responsible to connect us with government, and this event could happen. So hmmm . . . I may say, collaborating with external partners is the key (NS)

Conclusion

The collaboration of K-pop fans, in particular, KPOP 4 Planet for raising climate activism awareness in the age of new media clearly demonstrates the concept of participatory culture. Even though the K-pop fandom is still surrounded by negative fan practices such as fan wars, the massive support from fellow K-pop fans towards the initial formation of KPOP 4 Planet as an online community become one of the driving forces that solidify it. It is found that there are many occasions in which K-pop fans took part in raising sensitive issues relating to climate and environmental issues on Twitter.

There are several points to be considered that allow K-pop fans to collaborate to raise awareness of climate activism, which include sharing a similar interest in K-pop, creating a safe community on Twitter, utilizing Twitter for climate advocacy, the strong solidarity and support within the K-pop fandom, and the presence of new media technologies.

Most importantly, participatory culture can be done by creating a safe space for K-pop fans to talk and initiate discourses and activities on climate crisis, as it is a very important agenda for them. KPOP 4 Planet, as a safe online community, hopes that through this movement, K-pop fans can set aside their differences and unite for a common purpose to fight for climate justice. This goal becomes an important part of fan activism what it means to be a responsible, environmentally caring, and socially aware fandom.

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