Squid Game Series as Social Phenomenon on Twitter: A Study of Participatory Culture

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Abstract

As information becomes more disruptive, now we can access it from the devices in our hands. Globalization has produced many new cultural influences on people in this world, one of which is the Korean Wave. The K-pop industry has quickly grown globally, and Korean films and dramas are the most popular among most people. Through the support of information technology, participation culture is emerging as a new form of culture that allows individuals to create and distribute content. This study investigates how the Indonesian fans of South Korean culture, known as Hallyu, consume and produce new cultural artefacts from the trending Netflix series entitled *Squid Game*. Using Henry Jenkins' Participatory culture theory with qualitative methods and virtual ethnography, this research analyzed several data on the @kdrama_menfess Twitter social media account. This study found that there were four forms of communication in the account, including affiliation, expression, collaboration in problem-solving, and circulation, where everything was created collectively. The role of the account and the community administrator were inseparable from the role of fans exchanging information.

Keywords: participatory culture, squid game, Korean wave, twitter, media.

1. Introduction

In the digital era, humans have been facilitated in every way, including exchanging information quickly. The growing technology makes it easier for humans to communicate and access information without spending a lot of energy. The use of technology today has expanded not only as a means of communication and information, but has also penetrated into the entertainment sector. Now it can be accessed from various platforms. We can watch on tv, cellphone, computer, and even when we are not at home, we can still watch entertainment. The situation that opens up opportunities for new media development is named as 'Circulation' (Jenkins et al, 2013). The word 'circulation' has a broader meaning than 'distribution'. Circulation refers to the distribution of media content both top-down and bottom-up, also both commercial and populist. The shift from distribution to circulation signals a movement toward a more participatory culture in which the public is not just a consumer, but also a party that shapes, shares, frames, or reworks media content in ways never imagined before (Anshari, 2018; Jenkins et al., 2013).

At this time, entertainment not only becomes an eye freshener and stress reliever, but also has a great influence on spreading cultures. The culture of a country, along with the values contained therein then spread throughout the world to form *world culture*. The emergence of digital platforms is now taking on a role in changing the direction of cultural flows. In the past, traditional media, such as broadcasting and film, were dominated by a handful of Western media conglomerates. Unlike now in the pre-digital platform era, when Western countries dominated the

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production and distribution network, digital platforms played a crucial role in distributing popular culture, from non-Western to Western countries (Yong, 2017). This culture then becomes a culture that is in great demand by many people which is then called popular culture, pop culture, or mass culture (Fiolitha, Irwansyah, 2020). In this regard, in recent years, Korean pop culture or better known as Hallyu or Korean Wave has become a cultural phenomenon that is growing rapidly throughout the world, especially in Indonesia (Jeong et al., 2017)

Korean Wave or Hallyu is a term that has emerged as a result of cultural waves from South Korea globally to various corners of the world. Starting in the early 1990s, the Korean Wave emerged after South Korea established diplomatic relations with China in 1992, then South Korean TV dramas and pop music gained popularity among the Chinese-speaking community. The term Hallyu itself was coined and popularized in 1999 by a Chinese newspaper, Beijing Youth Daily, due to the rise of South Korean pop culture. The use of this term is a description of the spread of South Korean culture and lifestyle which then spread widely throughout the world (Fiolitha, Irwansyah, 2020; Yong, 2021).

The Korean wave as popular culture can be proven by many products of South Korean culture such as films, series, fashion, food, and music that many people enjoy. In theory, popular culture is the culture that most people enjoy today. Whatever the crowd likes and is interested in is called pop culture. This popular culture is indeed alluring because the concept is light, interesting and fun. It makes everyone flock to want to be a part of it. Further, in this popular culture, the role of social media is vast. With the existence of social media, any news and information about movies, music, food, and much more, can quickly spread so that it can then be enjoyed by many people (Arief, 2017; Kusuma et al., 2020).

The spread of Korean pop culture cannot be separated from the role of technology and various social media to dissaminate making it easier for Indonesian people to access these various forms of entertainment (Fiolitha, Irwansyah, 2020). One of the conveniences in accessing South Korean culture can be seen in many digital streaming platforms available, such as Hulu, HBO GO, Netflix, etc. Netflix provides many films and series from various countries including South Korea that we can watch in our spare time. Of the many films and South Korean drama series, recently a Netflix series *Squid Game* is being hotly discussed not only by Indonesian people, but also people from all over the world.

The Korean drama series *Squid Game* has become a viral show lately. Apart from Indonesia, the *Squid Game* drama series were popular in many other countries. *Squid Game* is a drama series broadcast on Netflix. It has just started airing in September 2021. So far, the drama series has aired for nine episodes, telling the story of a collection of South Koreans who have problems with bank debt. These people generally face economic difficulties and find it difficult to pay their debts to the bank. Then these people are invited to play a game in a remote area. The game in the *Squid Game* series offers prizes for up to billions of South Korean won. The games played are childhood games for South Korean children. However, this game has a high risk since the losing player will die brutally, as if shot with a rifle. It managed to capture the attention of movie fans worldwide, and reached number one in the global top 10 Netflix on Friday, September 24, 2021 (Shalihah, 2021).

Many people followed and watched this series. This resulted in the occurrence of 'Squid Game Fever', where many people imitated the scenes and events in this ginseng country series. An interesting and different story compared to other South Korean drama series makes the *Squid Game* series get a good reception from Korean drama fans. Various promotions and information related to the series widely spread on social media, have generated great interest from the Indonesian people, giving rise to various phenomena.

Regarding to that phenomenon, research based on the corpus of *squid game* has been previously carried out. A study done by Cho (Cho, 2021) found that managing certain cultural elements was probably the most difficult aspect of subtitles in *Squid Game* series. Another research was conducted by Wood and Baughman (Wood, Baughman, 2012), who discussed Glee fan practices on Twitter for becoming a forum for fan projects, and also paid attention to the consumer behavior aspect targeted based on the audience's choice. In addition, Park (Park, 2013) revealed how social media Twitter could be used as a democratic public space by allowing citizens to engage in public affairs in carnivalistic ways. The investigation of how Indonesian fans of Korean series who consume and produce new cultural artefact related to *Squid Game* have not been conducted. Therefore, it is interesting to observe the '*Squid Game* Fever' as the result of a social phenomenon in the form of a trend after watching the series.

The consumption activities of the Indonesian people in the form of watching *Squid Game* through digital streaming platforms, have encouraged drama fans to download, support, criticize, reproduce, and recreate everything related to the series. They also uploaded them through social media, such as Twitter, which ultimately creating a new participatory cultural phenomenon. Thus, this study examines how participatory culture is formed in the *Squid Game* series on Twitter, especially on one of the Korean drama fan community accounts in Indonesia, @kdrama_menfess.

2. Materials and methods

Participation culture is defined as a new form of culture that is developing due to the support of information technology, where individuals or members of a community can participate in the creation and distribution of content. In a participatory culture, the audience is determined not only by size, but by the power to connect with other users, producers and consumers of this medium, to form the public (Ciszek, 2013; Jenkins, et al., 2015; Jenkins, 2020).

Participatory culture has been a concern that includes much of Jenkins' scholarly work. It focuses on developing media theory and principles of practice, whereby media users are primarily understood as active and creative participants rather than simply passive consumers and receptive audiences. This participatory engagement is increasingly crucial given the interactive communication capabilities and enhanced networking of digital technology and the internet. The nature of participatory culture in online settings means that public relations campaigns become 'borderless' and practitioners need to be aware of the reflexes of different cultures and common cultures (Tombleson, Katharina, 2017).

According to Gousong, there are several forms of community participation in the current digital era. First, consuming, where people only act as consumers who only see and read without taking part in production. Second, namely participation, where people in it relate to each other, users with other users, and user interactions with content (e.g. adding playlists, and sharing posts and comments with other users). Third, participate in producing, including creating and distributing personal content such as text, audio, video, and images (Cahya, Triputra, 2016; Manca, 2018).

Jenkins divides participatory cultural groups into four categories based on the form of communication that allows interactivity between members (Jenkins, 2009), including:

1.	Affiliations – is a form of participatory culture that is shown by the existence of efforts to join with other users both formally and informally, even merging can be done online or offline. Examples: Friendster, Facebook.

2.	Expressions – is a form of participatory culture that is represented by expressing expressions through a variety of new creativity as a result of the process of affiliation with other internet users. Examples: digital sampling, fan video making, fan fiction writing.

3.	Collaborative problem solving – is a form of participatory culture that is indicated by cooperation in a formal or non-formal group to increase knowledge or even try to find a way out of a problem from other members. Examples: Wikipedia, alternative reality gaming.

4.	Circulation – is a form of participatory culture which is indicated by the existence of activities to form a flow of information in the media to sharpen the information. Examples: podcasting, blogging.

Participation culture certainly does not have a mediocre meaning, but has a deeper meaning. A participatory culture can have continuous interaction and be used as an individual understanding to change and form a meaning for the actions taken. The meaning of the act of participation cannot be separated from its role as a producer who wishes to always provide information (Smith, 2015). Participatory culture also has another feature of the digital environment related to the role of the audience. First, talk about interactivity as a pre-programmed option into the platform. Second, talk about participation as a more open option that requires active creative decisions from participants who take individual or collective ownership of the type of content posted or circulated (Jenkins et al., 2017).

Henry Jenkins (Jenkins, 2009) also defines the concept of culture into 5 characteristics:

1.	Relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic, while having relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civil society involvement.

2.	Strong support for creating and sharing creations with others, for having strong support for creating and sharing works with other members.

3.   Some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices, having a kind of informal mentorship in the form of sharing knowledge from experienced to beginners.

4.   Members who believe that their contributions matter, that is, each member believes that their contributions matter.

5.   Members who feel some degree of social connection with one another, or feel a level of social connection with other members.

In this study, the researchers used qualitative research and also virtual ethnography. Qualitative research explores and understands the meaning in several individuals or groups of people originating from social problems (Creswell, 2014). Process and meaning are highlighted in qualitative research. Meanwhile, virtual ethnography is an ethnographic method carried out to see social and cultural phenomena of users in cyberspace (Angelone, 2018; Nasrullah, 2014). The theoretical basis is used as a guide so the research focus follows the facts on the ground. It can easily help researchers to dig deeper information related to a research topic which later the information obtained can be used to determine research objectives. The purpose is to understand the condition of a context by leading to the description in detail and in depth regarding the portrait of conditions in a natural context, about what actually happened in the field studies (Nugrahani, 2014). The researcher used a qualitative method to describe and analyze the words from the data collected from Twitter, a social media platform. It can refer to the study of human life, life experiences, behavior, emotions and feelings, as well as the function of organizations, social movements, cultural phenomena and interactions between people (Strauss, Corbin, 1998).

The type of data that we used is in the form of videos and audiovisuals on *Squid Game* series and Twitter. We collected, processed, and analyzed the data using several steps. First, identifying the relevant data as relevant as possible in the *Squid Game* series found on Twitter. The data are selected in a comprehensive way and according to the research topic. Second, reducing unimportant data and classifying the data. Third, analyzing the data by investigating the relationship between participatory culture theory and the data collected. Lastly, interpreting or explaining the findings of the research.

3. Discussion

Squid Game has become a popular discussion lately in Indonesian society, both in daily life and in cyberspace. *Squid Game* is attractive to the people of Indonesia because of the 'Hype' which is displayed and also served by various mainstream media in foreign countries including Twitter. It tells the story of Seong Gi-Hun and 455 other desperate people who risk their lives to participate in a series of games to win the prize of 45.6 billion won or equivalent to Rp. 555 billion. 456 participants had to overcome various obstacles in the game that they had actually played as a child. Lee Jung Jae as Seong Gi-Hun and Park Hae Soo as Cho Sang-Woo, play two childhood friends who meet again in this mysterious game to learn that there is more at stake than the prize money. One day Seong Gi-Hun was fired from his job so he became unemployed. His life turned miserable, but he had heard about a game that would award the winner's prize money of 45.6 Billion Won. This extremely fierce battle made the candidates have a great fear of risking their lives just to survive. However, the audience is left wondering who is the person responsible for this large-scale game with life or death stakes. This Korean thriller genre drama can break records because of the storyline that make the audience curious.

This South Korean original series was nominated in 2 categories at the 2021 Gotham Awards. It is an annual awards ceremony taking place in the United States that focuses on low-budget indie or independent films as well as TV series. In this 2021 Gotham Award, *Squid Game* is included in the category as a Breakthrough Series-Long Format (more than 40 minutes) along with 5 other series, one of which is *It's a Sin* from the HBO Max streaming platform (Putri, 2021). Creator of *Squid Game*, Hwang Dong-hyuk, had some ideas for the show after a few years spent reading *manga* and *manhwa* (Japanese and Korean comics) with similar themes. It included the influential horror satire *Battle Royale*, which became a pioneering work on survival games where people had to survive one by one (Romano, 2021).

In relation to that, we have observed that the Indonesian netizens did various activities on social media regarding their enthusiasm for the booming phenomenon of the Netflix series *Squid Game*. Many critics love the *Squid Game* series for the rating is also complete or 100 % on Rotten Tomatoes. According to Jo Elfving-Hwang, director of the Korean Research Center in Western

Australia, *Squid Game* skillfully combines elements of K-drama and Korean films. This is why the series is so popular. Elfving Hwang said that the topic of debt paralysis would be very familiar to many Koreans and other people elsewhere. This case is just similar when Hollywood launched endless remakes and superhero movies, where people looked for new and different content (Wikanto, 2021).

For many brands, the popular social media platform Twitter is very important. Twitter features (e.g. hashtags, retweets) make it easy for people to discuss what they're watching, connect with creators of their favorite entertainment brands, and share other messages they find on it (Negrete, Mcmanus, 2021). *Squid Game* is one of the products of the globalized Korean Wave in the world. The hype that occurred because of the event, caused the *Squid Game* fever for the Indonesian netizens on Twitter. The activities of the netizens have led them to become consumers as well as producers. This instance in particular – though not isolated by any means – therefore becomes a prime example of participatory culture, keeping in mind the growing pervasiveness of this phenomenon due to steady developments in technological convergence (Shetty, Gupta, 2021).

Mapping of participatory cultural activities of Indonesian netizens on Twitter discussing the *Squid Game* phenomenon, they are categorized into 4, namely affiliation, expression, collaborative problem solving, and circulation.

Affiliations

From various forms of participatory culture, the first step of participation is affiliations. According to Murray, affiliations is to get closer, cooperate or reply to the invitation of others who are allied (other people who resemble or like the subject) (Hall, Lindzey, 1993). It is a form of participatory culture that is shown by the existence of efforts to join with other users both formally and informally, even merging can be done online or offline (Jenkins, 2009). One example of the form of affiliation launched by Henry Jenkins is a twitter account "Mention Confess" or Menfess for short with the theme of Korean Drama.

The @kdrama_menfess account on social media Twitter has become one of the main community places for Korean series fans. Although the form of affiliation that occurs is not by joining the community, but each fan account participates in the culture of the *Squid Game*. To join this community, one can easily participate by following the account, then automatically the followers of the account will get information about Korean dramas including the *Squid Game* drama series.

It has become a truism that foster a sense of community, whether performed online or in person (Jenkins, 2018). The fandom defines themselves through our social relationships in affiliations. Furthermore, Jenkins' participation features reduced barriers to expression and increased civil society involvement, which are also features found in this form of affiliations. With a range of abilities represented, their members can serve as a resource for induction and mentoring novice participants (Halverson et al., 2018). Generally, now fans or the civic society can easily get involved and participate in an online community. There are various platforms for just observing and participating, one of which is social media, namely Twitter. The requirement to join this community is only to follow this fan base account. After becoming a follower of an account, it is easy for fans to be actively involved in exchanging information, photos, and content about the same interests.

Expression

Having discussed our discovery of affiliation, then there are expressions. The potential of participatory culture for creative engagement and expression has been investigated by Jenkins. Participatory culture is considered potential because of 1) barriers to artistic expression and member involvement including relatively low; 2) strong support for creating and sharing creations with others; 3) trust among members about how they contribute to each other; 4) the level of social connection with other people.

From the data, we have found that many netizens were very enthusiastic about this Korean drama series. Participatory culture does not escape the concept of fandom. Jason defines fandom and fan culture as "existing primarily in relation to other external cultural objects. A key aspect to fan culture is that participants have an emotional engagement with the shared form of culture, dedicating their time, money and creative energy to exploring that relationship" (Mittell, 2013). Twitter provides a platform for *Squid Game* fans to express anything related to the Netflix series freely. We found forms of expression in the form of fan videos, posters, photos and in the form of dramas inspired by the *Squid Game*. Then, they post the creations of these fans on their personal

Twitter accounts in the form of a mention confess account which we explained earlier to have fun with other *Squid Game* series lovers.

One of the Twitter accounts, @cumanspam_, uploaded a picture in the context of the participants. This creativity of *Squid Game* fans showed that there were forms of expression in participatory culture. It can be observed that the fan uploaded a picture of two children who were imitating or cosplaying one of the antagonist characters in the drama series. The way the member dressed like the characters in the *Squid Game* series was one of the member's creativity. Their creation was very simple, namely by using a traditional rice bowl (in Indonesia known as *besek*) as his mask, and wearing clothes that had almost the same colour as the characters in the *Squid Game* series; they then uploaded it to twitter on the basis of belief that their contribution to the *Squid Game* phenomenon was significant. The caption in the tweet was "Squid game of kids' version". The expression was a parody of the *Squid game* played by children. It is clear that the expression formed is by becoming a cosplayer, so it is similar to making artwork. As aforementioned, the researcher found that there were characteristics of participatory culture, namely the trust of members who believed that their contribution was important. In an ideal participatory culture, members believe their contributions matter and feel some degree of social connection with one another (Jenkins et al., 2017).

In addition, another Twitter account used other form of expression. The expression made by @moviemenfess account for example, was also the expression of parody of the series. The account posted various images in the tweet to show that they represented the concept of the *Squid Game*. They were packaged and mixed with aspects inherent in Indonesian culture. The name *Squid Game* on the image was changed into *Dolanan Game,* which in Javanese means a game played by little boys with their friends. Javanese is the largest regional language used by many Indonesian people. The mask used by the Front man in the picture posted was also changed to a mask that has Indonesian characteristics, resembling *ondel-ondel*, which is a large puppet figure in Indonesian traditional folk performance. The *Betawi* people—one of the Indonesian tribes—use *ondel-ondel* to preserve their culture that has existed for a long time. The puppet can also be a costume and it can dance to the typical rhythm of *Betawi* music. It is also described as a manifestation of the ancestors of the *Betawi* people who always look after their children, grandchildren, and even residents of a village. Besides, in the caption of the image, it was also stated "squid game (2021) with added elements of local wisdom", which indicated that the cultures and customs were inspired by the Indonesian local culture. Therefore, the expression displayed in the tweet was a diffusion of the *Squid Game* series and also aspects of local wisdom existed in Indonesia.

Collaborative problem-solving

The next category of participatory culture is collaborative problem-solving. It is involved in building knowledge and providing answers to unresolved questions or issues in a group context. Fans work together to create fan pages to share their thoughts and add their insight, highlighting the knowledge-building aspects of participatory culture (Bermudez et al., 2020). In this context, it is the behavior of *Squid Game* fans to work together to solve problems, develop knowledge between fellow fans and also complete tasks. Collaborative problem solving relates to teamwork used to create new ideas or achieve goals. This can be achieved through discussion groups that focus on specific issues (Winter, 2011). Contributions within the participatory culture are driven by a set of values, practices and expectations that emerge about how people communicate with one another (Tomaž, Walanchalee, 2020).

Problem solving collaboration is a form of participatory culture characterized by the existence of forms of cooperation in a group or social media post both formally and informally to develop new knowledge. We found various tweets about collaborations between *Squid Game* fans to discuss and also solve problems related to what is in the Netflix series.

An interesting example can be observed from the @tubirfess social media account which shared an argument about the problems occurred in the *Squid Game* series. The fan prompted a critical question which have been translated into English.

@tubirfess: 2beeer! [Triggered!]. I saw a tweet saying that squid game was not diversified since no black people played in the film. What do you think? I think it's not that important because it's Korean series, and not series about diversity.

The followers of the account who have become affiliated with this culture then shared their resolutions and counterarguments to the statement given by the admin of the community. The following are the examples.

@etherlone: Asians don't owe anyone non-Asians any representation.

@Cheeseislikeu: No need. Indeed, they just want everything to be "diverse". But their good intention ruined the behavior by starting to feel "superior"

@petiteshort: 'Ali' as a representative of immigrants in my opinion is enough. In reality, mostly immigrants or illegals are treated unfairly and not even paid when they work.

The comments above show that there is collaborative problem solving to develop information and create engagement with fans, so that members who often share in the community can collaborate to solve problems or issues in the *Squid Game* series community. This concerns the unification of ideas and agencies, social processes and practices into a cybernetic convergence analysis closely related to social change, where social life consists of space and time. The process of social change is a process that describes how space and time are produced by agents acting through this collaborative problem solving (Bayquni, 2021). In this case, unconsciously, the examples above show the characteristics of participatory culture, namely the existence of a kind of informal guidance from more experienced community members to novice members within the scope of this community. This is indicated by the comments from the community that provided resolutions and contra given by the community admin. Usually, in the Korean drama community, people who often argue in the comment column are those who have often watched and know more about the world of Korean dramas. The comments indicated that the fans watched Korean dramas and shared opinions regarding statements by the community admin, then together with other members collaborated to solve problems existed in the *Squid Game* series community.

Another data that displays collaborative problem solving can be observed in the main affiliate account asking certain questions.

*@kdrama_menfess: *kdm*[account name] Does anyone know the difference between squares, triangles and circles?*

The fan community account shared a picture of antagonist characters in the series who wore costumes with various symbols on their headscarves (square, circle, and triangle). From the question and the picture shared, *Squid game* fans were stimulated to answer collaboratively. Some examples can be seen from some accounts answering the questions.

@neverdistressed: circle: logistics division, triangle: soldier, square: manager. Don't know if it's right, correct me if I'm wrong

The answer *"don't know if it's right, correct me if I'm wrong"* from one of the fans above also indicated that this fan invited other fans to cooperate in solving problems given by the main account.

Circulation

The last form of participatory culture is circulation. It is a form of participatory culture indicated by the existence of activities to shape the flow of information in the media to sharpen information. As a form of participatory culture, circulation creates waves and channels of the information in the media to enhance the content.

Online creativity requires material support as well. Though "virtual," their form is neither abstract nor contextual. This means that despite the sometimes-unorganized way creativity moves on the Internet-across social networks, platforms, and communities-the site-specific nature of creativity on the Internet must not be overlooked. In short, online creative spaces possess unique norms, contexts, ethos, as well as a range of technical affordances that might generate creative participation in certain kinds of circulations (Baym, 2015; Literat, Glăveanu, 2018).

Circulation occurs because of the formation of interconnected media flows such as transforming information and ideas that are owned into the media they have. We found that @kdrama_menfess account shared a question to *Squid Game* fans and a picture of a Korean actor.

@kdrama_menfess: Do you believe it or not if he's [Wi Ha Joon] in the d word [dead]? I do not. It seems like a Squid game without Wi Ha Joon is like vegetable without salt.

The question was answered by some fans:

@wonsream: I don't think so, because Hwang Junho is one of the outsiders who witnessed the existence of the Squid Game. It is said that in season 2 will be more about the frontman and the police, but don't know how the end of the film later.

@shiningdayx: I don't think so, he was just fainted. When it's about to end, the time-setting was different. If he's alive 2 years from now, maybe Gihun can get help, and they can start looking for each other, but no clue at all....maybe it will be explained in season 2.

@yourberry12: He really didn't die, it looked like he just got shot in the shoulder and pretended to drown.

The interaction above creates a form of circulation. This happens because the formation of this circulation is used when disseminating information regarding their idols, which allows them to reach more people. Therefore, the flow created from this form is the amplification of the content of the information.

The feeling of a social relationship between fans is also one of the characteristics of participatory culture. It portrayed that the amplification of information from the first party (the menfess account) could form a belief in social relations with other members. When each fan threw an argument at each other and got the attention of fellow members, then they considered being a part of the community.

The level of social connection has changed not only from the beginning to just exchanging information, but also building relationships with humans as social beings. Apart from these characteristics, it also proved that the members believed that their contribution was meaningful. They realized that no matter how small their participation was, they had contributed to their community. This happened because one member connected with another member. When they joined a community, they were considered to be part of that community. The data illustrated that a high sense of solidarity and mutual help was formed in a participatory culture.

Another example of the form of circulations can be seen from the example of interaction as follows:

@kdrama_menfess: Everyone, this is WOMAN art director of squid game [showing portrait art director, Chae Kyoung-Sun]

The question was answered by some fans:

@taeri2521: One of the excellent things from the squid game compared to other dramas, the sets were so real and pretty. They presented beautiful shots through extraordinary artistic means.

@sweetgrizzlyy: It's not surprising, when climbing the colorful stairs of the labyrinth, I was very surprised, very artistic

@seo_lovekwang: Just finished ep 4, will it continue...? The words that came out, apart from the enormous sets, were also swear words...

In the following data, it can be observed that the purpose of circulation is sharpening information on the media. The affiliate account provided information about the director behind *Squid Game*. Besides that, the fans and other consumers were invited to actively participate in the creation and circulation of new content. From this flow of information, they finally made circulation of the information so that it continued to be conveyed to other fans. Forming a media flow in this case is an activity that creates an interconnected media flow (Burgess, Green, 2018; Jenkins, 2009).

4. Results

Mapping of participatory cultural activities of Indonesian netizens on Twitter discussing the *Squid Game* phenomenon, they are categorized into 4, namely affiliation, expression, collaborative problem solving, and circulation. The results showed that for affiliate activities, netizens who loved the *Squid Game* series joined and discussed in an account on twitter called "K-Drama Menfess" which discussed all drama series in South Korea, one of them was *Squid Game*. It also proved that content sharing activities such as information, knowledge, experiences, ideas, photos, videos were dominant. The second form of participatory culture is expression. The use of social media produced a variety of new creative forms in fans communities. Many of them created artwork based on a character, costume, and story. Next, the third form of culture is collaborative problem solving. The results of the study showed that there was an interaction between one member of the community and other community members in solving a problem occured in the community. The last one is circulation, which is a form of participatory culture indicated by the existence of activities to shape the flow of information in the media with the aim of sharpening information. In this form, the researcher found a participatory culture shown by the account of Korean drama community that shared posts about the *Squid Game* series to the fans on Twitter. This is called a circulating form of participatory culture because the community members shared information about their idols, which then reached more people. In short, the @kdrama_menfess became a trigger for fans to participate or share about what they enjoyed.

This narrative showed how the community shared information and parody, as well as searched for answers to questions within the scope of this Korean Wave. As in the results of the discussion, this study found that this affiliate account posted about lots of issues related to the series to be shown to fans for their response. In this way, Jenkins' participatory culture was shaped by the fans, unconsciously creating an ecosystem where one participant issued an argument for the other participants to see and therefore created a circulation, so that the fan community formed an automatic ecosystem. It is undeniable that social media such as twitter is also very active in helping netizens find some information with fellow fans in the same fanbase.

5. Conclusion

In a participatory culture, fans or followers of a particular culture are not only media consumers, but also producers, especially in the scope of social media. The phenomenon of *Squid Game* as an object in this study revealed the implications of individual preference for popular culture participated in building a fan ecosystem. Based on the analysis carried out above, the form of communication created by the fans had four main pillars, from affiliation, expression, collaboration in problem-solving, to circulation, where everything was created collectively. The cultural practice of participation in *Squid Game* fans could not be separated from the role of each account and the admin who was able to develop the community as a means of exchanging information for people who had the same preferences about the series. For further research, the Jenkins' cultural shift concept from the data could be identified, to obtain more comprehensive and deeper results.

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