



# Fan Fervor and Older Populations in South Korea: *Devotees of YouTube Star Beodeuri*

Huikyong PANG, Haesoo LEE, and Yong-jin WON

## Abstract

*This study examines the distinctive characteristics of fan activities associated with an older population in their fifties, sixties, and seventies, the admirers of the South Korean YouTube star, Beodeuri (BDR). Through observation of the YouTube Videos of BDR's performance and the posts in her online fan café, this study has found that compared to younger fans who idolize their stars, dedicating time, money, and energy to fan activity, elderly fans tend to be stingier with money, only tipping their star in cash. Their fan community does not have ties as strong as those of younger fans, who are familiar with digital technology and the online world. However, elderly fans produce pleasure and a sense of freedom through their collective fan activity, which transgresses social expectations that older age groups must conduct themselves in a decent, gentle, and respectable manner. They also improve their self-esteem by identifying with their star, BDR, who has lived her life to the fullest. This case study of older populations' fandom articulates a different type of fandom from that of younger fandoms while also enriching the discussion of how Korea is ageing.*

**Keywords:** older population, industrialization generation, ageism, stingy and sluggish fandom, *yein* for *seomin*

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## Introduction

Beodeuri (BDR), a YouTube star in South Korea (hereafter Korea) has opened a path for older populations to join fan activities by providing them with a unique source of entertainment. BDR does not embrace the musical aesthetic of K-pop, the most globally popular Korean music genre. BDR, who openly shares her age of 47, has her own sense of style, which is different from that of the K-pop idols targeted at teenagers. She wears a *hanbok* (a Korean traditional clothing item) since she is a performer of Korean traditional folk music, *pumba*. In its classical form, the *hanbok* conveys elegance and grace, but BDR's modernized version looks kitschy because it accentuates her slim waist and shows the white underclothes beneath her dress. She also wears her hair in two ribbon-adorned braids, like a little girl, along with thick makeup and deep red lipstick that evokes sensuality.

BDR's performance differs from that of K-pop, which is defined by well-trained, fashionable dancers moving to contemporary Western musical rhythms. She is neither a musician nor a singer, but a *pumba* performer; her nickname is "Queen of *Pumba*." The Korean term *pumba*, which emerged during the Joseon dynasty, refers to a wandering street performer or entertainer who travels from village to village, sleeping in rough conditions and knocking on doors to beg food and money. In that sense, *pumba* no longer exists, but it lives on as a performance genre, with *pumba* performers like BDR showcasing their talents at festivals and marketplaces. In many cases, *pumba* performers give live performances at regional fairs and family events, unlike K-pop performers who are mediatized throughout the globe.

BDR's *pumba* performances have attracted a relatively older fan population. There is a reason older populations have flocked to a local marketplace personality while ignoring TV stars. Amid the financial and economic crisis of the late 1990s, the Korean music industry focused on K-pop idol dance music, a commercially profitable music genre aimed at teenagers. The industry also strengthened its relationship with national television networks and cable broadcasting companies, laying the foundation for idol music's monopoly. As a result, there were insufficient

media and entertainment sources aimed at the older population through conventional channels.

BDR's performances began to be mediatized and spread like wildfire through YouTube. As YouTube became an indispensable channel for enjoying popular music and musical performances from the 2010s onwards, singers of less well-known musical genres and obscure performers began to actively utilize its broadcast functions to approach the public. BDR also supplements her performances at regional festivals by streaming those shows to a larger audience through YouTube. The YouTube channel *Geumgangsantv*, which houses videos of BDR's performances, has a sizable fan base of approximately 80,800 subscribers. As of March 8, 2021, it had a total of 57 million video views. Most people who enthuse over BDR and constitute her YouTube subscriber base belong to an older population in their fifties, sixties, and even seventies (*Kyunghyang shinmun*, August 7, 2018; *Domin ilbo*, February 28, 2019).<sup>1</sup>

The older population has begun to join collective fan activities. Although fandom had traditionally been a cultural marker associated with teenagers, especially in Korea, in the case of BDR the older population came to the forefront of fandom activity. This study aims to examine this new cultural scene and identify the defining characteristics of fandom activities among older people. Understanding the fandom activity of senior citizens in Korea will deepen our understanding of how Koreans are ageing. In contrast to typical depictions of older people either as the physically limited or as sources of wisdom, this study will focus on other aspects of the life and entertainment choices of older populations.

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1. Lee Youjin, "Jungjangeon sarogap-eun YouTube, mwol bogo wae bolkkka?" (YouTube is Captivated by the Middle-aged, What Do They Watch and Why Do They Watch It?), *Kyunghyang shinmun*, August 7, 2018. [http://news.khan.co.kr/kh\\_news/khan\\_art\\_view.html?art\\_id=201808071551001](http://news.khan.co.kr/kh_news/khan_art_view.html?art_id=201808071551001); Hong Changshin, "Beodeuri-wa gajja nyuseu" (BDR and Fake News), *Domin ilbo*, February 28, 2019. <http://www.idomin.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=591244>.

## Literature Review

It was the 1980s when a corps of devoted teenage female fans appeared on the popular music scene in Korea (C. Kim 2012, 50). However, the teenage female fans were viewed either as blindly devoted and excessively emotional admirers or as uncritical followers absorbed in a culture industry fostered by capitalism. Dubbed *oppa budae*—a derogatory term meaning “a corps for elder brother”—the female teenage fans were also perceived as ignorant to the shackles of patriarchy and as insensate to feminist perspectives in that their inclination toward older male stars was translated into a conformity to patriarchy and embedded power structures. Since then, however, the age and gender ranges of popular music fandom have expanded; fan activities have become increasingly varied. In keeping with such changes, perspectives on fandom also have changed. In this section, we briefly outline the expansion of fandom and the diversification of fan activities in Korea. Particular attention will be paid to the realm of popular music fandom, which will provide rationale for this study’s focus on the fan activity of older populations.

At the start of the 1990s, the fandom phenomenon rapidly expanded along with the emergence of K-pop idols. Seo Taiji & Boys, known as the first K-pop group, debuted in 1992, symbolically altering the course of Korean popular music and causing its fandom to be blaze with excitement. Newly emerging Internet technology played a large part in the expansion of fandom (H. Kim and D. Park 2004). From the mid-1990s, the music production system was restructured by large capital investment, producing idol groups such as H.O.T, S.E.S, Shinhwa, and Fin.K.L. with specific images and styles targeted at teenagers. In response, fans formed communities and began to organize collective activities. They wore fan club uniforms—raincoats of certain colors—as symbolic tools to mark their identity and used boosters’ placards, balloons, and flashlights to encourage their stars. These teenage girls’ fan activity moved beyond screaming and shouting into the sphere of systematically arranged club activity.

Teenaged fans began to be viewed from different perspectives as media scholars in the United States introduced new theoretical notions. John Fiske’s “audience productivity” was one of these newly introduced notions

(1992, 37). According to Fiske, fandom is a common feature of popular culture, reflecting the cultural tastes of subordinate social formations, particularly those who are disempowered by any combination of gender, age, class, and race (1992, 30). Deploying Pierre Bourdieu's model of cultural capital (1984), Fiske has postulated that subordinate social groups produce and utilize "popular cultural capital," which can serve functions in the subordinate context similar to those of official cultural capital in the dominant context (Fiske 1992, 33). Just as official cultural capital works hand in hand with economic capital to produce social privileges and distinction, popular cultural capital serves as a significant source of pleasure and self-esteem among subordinate groups of people.

Henry Jenkins' notion of media fans as "textual poachers" (1992) was an extension of Fiske's approach. Jenkins perceives fans to be not just audiences, but active participants in media culture. Countering the negative stereotype of fans as cultural dopes, he has demonstrated that fans appropriate media texts and reread them to serve different interests, even rewriting texts to make them more responsive to their needs and bettering them to produce personal meanings, pleasure, and a sense of identity. Following the metaphor of "poaching," first used by Michel de Certeau in 1984, Jenkins has conceptualized fans as both drifters and poachers, constantly moving across and between media texts, delightfully creating new intertextual connections and juxtapositions (1992, 24).

Notions such as "audience productivity" and "textual poacher" have enriched Korean media and fandom studies. Fans of Seo Taiji & Boys received particular attention in media studies and were reevaluated as active audiences who developed their own sub-cultural practices (Dongyeon Lee 2001). After the band retired from the stage in 1996, their fan club members broke away from a subordinate relationship with their star and created a social campaign against a music ranking TV show that stirred up unnecessary and irrational competition between musicians (H. Kim and Y. Won 2002, 273–274). This fan-fueled social campaign was positively viewed by media scholars, who came to believe in the potential of fandom as a constructive agent to spark a significant social movement (e.g. Dongyeon Lee 2001; H. Kim and Y. Won 2002).

In the mid-2000s, fandom became a cultural phenomenon associated with middle-aged people (SooAh Kim 2010; Y. Kim 2011; C. Kim 2012; S.). Traditionally, fandom had been viewed as a cultural marker for teenagers. This time, however, fandom expanded to include men and women in their twenties and thirties and even older generations, just as terms including *samchon paen* ('uncle fan'), *nuna paen* ('elder sister fan'), and *imo paen* ('auntie fan') and *ajumma paen* ('middle-aged woman fan' or 'madam fan') were coined. It was surprising to see the middle-aged become fans of K-pop idols, given that their intended audiences had been teenagers. This new trend may have emerged due to the fact that the teenagers who were fans of K-pop idols in the 1990s retained their fandom tendencies as they aged. It is also possible that with the emergence of the so-called second generation of K-pop idols, the idol musical spectrum came to be more diversified than in the past, satisfying the tastes of middle-aged men and women (SooAh Kim 2010; C. Kim 2012).

Adult male fandom appeared along with the surge of girl groups in the mid-2000s led by the success of Wonder Girls and Girls' Generation. Female idol groups increasingly used sexualized presentations due to industry pressure, distinguishing themselves from their first generation idol counterparts. They attempted to arrest attention from older male audiences by applying the term *oppa* in most of their songs (Epstein and Turnbull 2014, 331). However, such sexualization of girl groups aroused controversy due to the fact that the idol groups had underage performers. Equating adult male fanship with voyeurism or pedophilia, feminist objections to the newfound adult male fandom were raised online (SooAh Kim 2010; Y. Kim 2011).

Amid debates surrounding the fandom of older men, those fans began to call themselves *samchon paen* to hide the problematic aspects of being older men who feel sexual desire toward younger, even underage, girls (SooAh Kim 2010; Y. Kim 2011). The term *samchon* (uncle) lends a familiar or non-sexual tone to their adoration, unlike *oppa*, which "can be used by young women to address a slightly older male often with a connotation of amatory interest" (Epstein and Turnbull 2014, 319). These older *samchon*, with their financial stability, support younger stars by providing expensive

gifts, which include not only pricey watches and accessories, but also healthy food, an item that is usually provided by family members who are concerned about health and well-being (SooAh Kim 2010, 109). By doing so, uncle fans frame their desire as “an avuncular concern for the welfare of the girls” (SooAh Kim 2010, cited in Epstein and Turnbull 2014, 331).

*Nuna paen* (‘elder sister fan’) turned up on the music scene along with the rise of non-conventional masculinity among second-generation boy groups.<sup>2</sup> Among idol boy bands, SHINee was known for showcasing a kind of androgynous sexuality by presenting themselves as handsome boys stripped of traditional masculinity (C. Kim 2012, 119–120). Through a style represented by skinny jeans and an ambiguous sexuality somewhere between that of boys and men, SHINee attracted emotional support from adult women. The boy group also hinted that their love interest could be an older woman, as in their song “Replay,” which includes the lyrics, “Nuna, you are so pretty, boys won’t leave you alone.”

Middle-aged female fans of male idols have attracted the attention of researchers who wish to examine their cultural practices since, up until now, married women’s expression of adoring feelings and sexual desires toward younger male stars was considered unacceptable in patriarchal societies like Korea.<sup>3</sup> Kim Songhee and Yang Dongwook explained that some middle-aged female fans call themselves *imo* (aunty) fan or *ajumma* (middle-aged woman) fan, which carries an asexual overtone, as a strategy to hide their sexual desires for younger male stars (2013, 59–60). These older fans, who

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2. Korean soft masculinity came to prominence via the popularity of *kkonminam* (‘flower-handsome man’) (Epstein and Turnbull 2014, 331), a result of changing representations of gender and sexuality in the media after the Asian Economic Crisis of the late 1990s. During the crisis, more men lost their jobs than their female counterparts; the shrinkage of traditionally male-dominated industries like construction and manufacturing affected male workers’ job losses (Rosin 2013). Since then, beautiful actors with fair porcelain skin, emotional vulnerability, and sweet smiles have gained popularity.
  3. Indeed, this was not the first time researchers observed middle-aged married female fans of Korean popular culture. In 2002, the Korean TV mini-series melodrama *Winter Sonata* (*Gyeoul yeonga*) was a huge hit throughout Asia. Middle-aged Japanese women in particular swooned over the Korean men, while complaining about the “herbivore men” of Japan (Mori 2008).

belong to the 30-plus age bracket and have professional careers, place themselves in the position of “(financial) supporter” of their star in order to distinguish themselves from teenage fans, who are seen as “followers” who only adore and worship their stars. As supporters, adult female fans send lunch boxes, food trucks, and catering services to shooting locations as gifts for their stars and the staff members working for them (S. Kim and D. Yang 2013, 52–57). This practice shows that the middle-aged female fans do not resist traditional gender and sexuality norms, but perform the caring labor prescribed for middle-aged women in a patriarchal society (S. Kim and D. Yang 2013, 66).

Meanwhile, other studies have found that both middle-aged fans and teenage fans of K-pop came to take on a new role as “active producers” of idol groups (Shin 2019; Kang et al. 2018; S. Kim and D. Yang 2013). TV audition shows opened up a new era of K-pop fandom where fan activism became more assertive and fans were able to exert more bottom-up energy. Since 2009, the number of reality TV audition shows has increased, starting with *Superstar K* and *K-pop Star*, the Korean versions of *American Idol*. Hopeful singers appeared on the shows and competed to achieve the opportunity to debut or to promote themselves. Despite encountering criticism for their culture of severe survivalism (e.g., Kyoungsook Lee 2011; Keehyeung Lee 2012; Hee-eun Lee 2014; Won and Kim 2012), these shows gained favor with viewers and created huge fan bases. Fans began to engage in activities oriented toward placing their favorites in the top ranks of audition shows, including online voting and campaigning. Through such activities, the role of media fans has shifted from follower and supporter to “producer” who helps create stars (Shin 2019).

Admittedly, the development of digital technology has also aided in this type of fan activity and led fans to becoming key players in star production, which is in keeping with Jenkins’ claim that fan activism has become more assertive, more efficient, and larger in scale in the era of digital convergence (2012, 2). Fans, who acquire power from digital technology, archive, reproduce, and recirculate music content as well as produce subtitles and translations to increase the global visibility of Korean popular content (Baym 2010; Hong 2013; J. Kim 2015). The convergence of smartphones and social



media has enabled immediate and perpetual access to entertainment industries. As a result, fans have begun to intervene with the business decisions of their stars' management companies as well as to systematically manage their own stars. They have even collectively composed an idol group, creating its concept, group name, and debut song (Shin 2019, 98).

The activities of younger fans have gone beyond the realm of entertainment and inspired a wave of social activism. K-pop idol fans have participated in socio-cultural events such as fundraising, donating to charity, and volunteering in emergency situations (Jiyoung Lee 2018; Jeehaeng Lee 2019). These activities helped promote their stars by creating positive images but are now part of idol fandom culture. For example, A.R.M.Y, the global fanbase of BTS (the K-pop boy band that has rocketed to global stardom), recently launched a campaign to raise funds in support of the Black Lives Matter movement after they found out that the band had donated US\$1 million to support the movement.<sup>4</sup> Eventually, A.R.M.Y raised and donated an additional US\$1million to the movement as well.

In summary, in the realm of popular music, the fandom phenomenon rapidly expanded as the K-pop idol industry gained popularity among teenage females in the 1990s. At the time, new academic notions of fandom, which had been advanced in the United States, were introduced to enrich fandom studies as well as to create a positive impression of fandom. Fans, who had been understood as passive and uncritical receivers, began to be recognized as active producers of pleasure, meaning, and identity. With the advent of the second generation of idols in the mid-2000s, the age and gender range of fandom expanded from teenage female fans to middle-aged men and women. This phenomenon triggered academic fandom studies to investigate the distinctive features of the fandom activity of older fans. Although staying abreast of the evolution of fans' position from follower to supporter to producer, media and fandom studies have not approached the fandom activity of older population in their fifties, sixties, and seventies. Just

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4. Jake Kwon, et al., "BTS and Its 'Army' Donates More Than \$2 million to Black Lives Matter," CNN, June 8, 2020. <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/06/08/entertainment/bts-army-black-lives-donation/index.html>.

as the mainstream entertainment industry has overlooked this age group, the fandom activity of older people has not been emphatic enough to attract academic and social attention.

Recently, however, in accordance with the fact that Korean society is recognized as rapidly transitioning to an “ageing society,” the list of entertainment options for older Koreans has been markedly improving. For example, trot singer Song Ga-in gained immense popularity from 2019 and 2020; a huge fan base was formulated among older people.<sup>5</sup> Since Song’s success, the number of TV shows featuring trot music has increased on national network and cable channels. Starting with *Miss Trot* (TV Chosun 2019), shows such as *Mr Trot* (TV Chosun 2020), *Trot Queen* (MBN 2020), *I Am a Trot Singer* (MBC 2020), *Trot God is Here* (SBS 2020) have been produced and aired, formulating fan bases among older generation.

Therefore, this study aims to identify the distinctive characteristics of older population’s fandom activity. Among the fandom groups comprised of older populations, this study focuses on BDR fandom, the emergence of which predates the rise of fan fever for trot music. BDR’s *pumba* performances at regional festivals and marketplaces have been videotaped and streamed through her YouTube channel since 2016, fulfilling the tastes of older and working-class populations.

## Methods

Aiming to discern the defining characteristics of the fan activity of older populations, the authors of this study first subscribed to the YouTube channel, *Geumgangsantv*, which houses the videos of BDR’s performances. Launched on April 17, 2016, the *Geumgangsantv* channel had 853 video uploads as of October 11, 2019. Among the uploads, we selected 387 videos with 50,000 views. The videos usually last about one hour, but edited

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5. “Idol paendeom anbuleopda...seuta-e ppajin jungjangnyeong-deul” (We Don’t Envy Idol Fandom...the Middle-aged Who Fall in Love with their Stars), *MBC*, September 15, 2020. [https://imnews.imbc.com/replay/2020/nwdesk/article/5911035\\_32524.html](https://imnews.imbc.com/replay/2020/nwdesk/article/5911035_32524.html).

versions with highlights of BDR's performances last only around 10 minutes. Highlight videos which do not show the interactions between the performer and the audience were eliminated from the 387 most popular videos, leaving 261 full-length performance videos, among those ten were randomly chosen for detailed analysis.<sup>6</sup>

We also visited BDR's online fan café (<https://cafe.daum.net/arang4435>). On our first visit to the café on March 12, 2019, we learned that only members, the number of which stood at 36,773 at the time of this study, have the right to access and leave messages on the bulletin boards. Having also learned that only those born before 1971 (over the age of 50) were eligible to apply for membership of the café, one of the authors, who was over 50, created a username to receive permission from the café operators to become a general club member. After receiving permission, we informed the operators of our research project and asked for their allowance to conduct interviews with the café members. Although we failed to conduct interviews, they provided us with the chance to observe the posts on the bulletin boards. We visited the café almost daily from March 12, 2019 to October 11, 2019 (8 months) to conduct observations on the posts.

To explain the café in brief, the operators provide the schedules and locations of BDR's performances and monitor if the members comply with the café rules—for example, posting content about politicians, political parties, and religion is prohibited. The group photos posted on the bulletin board show that men and women are equally active among BDR's fans. The operators encourage café members to be polite to each other and to act their age. This guide seems to be made based on the belief that some Korean elderly speak in a direct, rude, and even insulting manner, just as described by the slang *kkondae*, which is pejoratively applied to the Korean elderly.<sup>7</sup> In

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6. Video upload dates: March 13, 2017; May 14, 2017; October 30, 2017; May 27, 2018; June 17, 2018; October 3, 2018; December 15, 2018; February 2, 2019; July 13, 2019; August 19, 2019.

7. It is noteworthy here that the BBC selected the slang, *kkondae* for its “word of today” in July 2019. Referring to those who are entitled, self-righteous, and stubborn, *kkondae* is usually used as an insult, pointedly calling out older male Koreans “who are quick to dole out unsolicited advice and even quicker to demand absolute obedience from their juniors”

addition, the operators discourage their attempts to invade BDR's privacy by gathering detailed information about her private life, possibly because the smallest biographical details of stars' lives are subject to close public scrutiny. All of these rules seem to be designed to inspire the café members to be model fans who focus on BDR without distraction.

There were 24,297 posts uploaded by café members on the free bulletin board as of October 11, 2019, when this study was in progress. Reading and rereading the posts, we examined why the elderly had come to adore BDR as well as what activities they had created and performed as BDR fans. To find the distinctive features of older population fandom, we compared the activities of older fans with those of teenage and middle-aged fans, the traditional heavyweight players in fandom. In order to grasp the main characteristics of younger fans' activities, we referred to extant studies on relevant topics. In the last stage of our research study, we had the chance to conduct an interview with BDR via the text message system of the café. Because the café operators would not allow for a phone call or face-to-face interview, we sent a text message with questions regarding the performer and her audience, and BDR kindly sent to us her answers in a two page word file. Although this interview process was strained due to BDR's busy schedule and the COVID-19 outbreak, it was still helpful for our understanding of the main features of older population fandom.

## Findings

### *The Fan Fever of Older Populations for a Pumba Performer*

*Pumba*, which refers to both its performer and the performance, emerged during the Joseon dynasty. In the course of modernization during the Japanese colonial period, Korean traditional art and folk culture were

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(Soozee Kim, "The Korean Word that Embodies the Tension among Generations Building—and Exploding—in the Modern Workplace," *BBC*, July 22, 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20190718-kkondae>).

marginalized and disappeared; *pumba* suffered the same fate (Kang 2017, 313–314). Under South Korea’s military dictatorship of the 1970s and 1980s, folk culture was rediscovered by its opposition forces and acted as a source of inspiration for the cultural movements against the authoritarian rule (Kang 2017, 314). *Pumba* was revitalized amid the resurrection of folk culture. However, this time, *pumba* became a genre of traditional art performance, known as *madanggeuk*—outdoor public performances with political significance and characterized by humor and satire. *Pumba* performers lampooned the politics of the time (Kang 2017, 314–315).

In the mid-1990s, it evolved once again as *pumba* performers were invited to regional festivals, held by regional governments in efforts to boost their economies by attracting tourists (Kang 2017, 316–318). *Pumba* traveled throughout the country to fairs, festivals, and marketplaces to give performances and gather large crowds. At this time, *pumba* became increasingly commercialized and characterized by show business tactics. *Pumba* groups performed humorous gags without political significance. They also played Korean traditional musical instruments such as *kkwaenggwari* (a small gong) and *janggu* (an hourglass-shaped, double-headed drum), sang trot songs, and performed acrobatics to satisfy the various tastes of the audience (Kang 2017, 317). As compensation for their performances, *pumba* groups were tipped by the audiences. Tipping was dubbed “paying *yeotgap*” (the price for taffy), since they traditionally sold cheap hard taffy during their performances.

Giving life to the peculiarities of commercialized *pumba*, BDR plays *janggu*, a Korean traditional musical instrument, and cymbal, a Western instrument, to spur the crowd’s enjoyment to the fullest. She also sings, particularly trot songs, and engages in comedic banter. In fact, BDR is a bawdy joker. Unlike K-pop idol stars who tend to present a sanitized image of sweetness and purity, BDR freely tells vulgar and dirty jokes between her songs. The YouTube videos of her performances—even the hour-long videos—are edited versions, not live broadcasts, largely due to the indecent jokes. BDR speaks frankly to her audiences and even curses at them. Whereas K-pop idols talk to their fans politely, bowing deeply from their waists, BDR greets the audiences, with “Are you beggars hungry?” The

reversed hierarchical relationship between the performer and the audience in BDR's performance removes formality, offering a humorously crude tone that the audiences enjoy.

Fascinated by the pleasant atmosphere of BDR's performance, audiences have expressed their love for her and joined her fan community. BDR's fan community consists of older populations: the lower age limit is fifty. On the bulletin board of the fan café, members often introduce themselves as follows: "Hello, I am Nosinsa (an old gentleman) from 5th grade Class No. 6" (ID: Pumbaga jota).<sup>8</sup> This humorous introduction with grade and class is a way for some older people to indicate their age. Another member may introduce themselves by saying, "I am Chonno (an old man from a rural area) from 6th grade Class No. 3" (ID: Bohemian), hinting that he is 63 years old. Here such questions arise as, "Is the fan activity of these older fans similar to the fan activity of younger fans?" and "What types of fan activity do the more senior populations display compared to those of younger fans?" Our study begins with these questions.

### *A Stingy and Sluggish Fandom?*

One might hypothesize that the activities of older fans will differ from those of younger fans. Among the various reasons for this assumption, three deserve consideration: their age, the social expectations placed upon older people, and their generational experience. First, their age might possibly affect and reduce the scope of their fan activity. With age, physical strength, cognitive functions, and emotional excitement decline (Hosun Lee 2010). Although there are individual differences, ageing generally results in changes in intellectual and psychological capacities. Older people are less curious and more indifferent, showing diminished interest in what were once their favorite activities (Hosun Lee 2010). Considering these characteristics, BDR's elderly fans are estimated to be less assertive and less pushy than younger fans.

Second, elderly fans might be less energetic about their fan activity due

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8. Here and in future instances, ID refers to a fan username at the online fan café for BDR.

to social expectations regarding appropriate behavior for older adults. Korean culture is known for its deeply ingrained seniority system, rooted in Confucianism from the Joseon dynasty. During the Joseon dynasty, the sovereign rulers encouraged the entrenchment of Chinese Confucian ideals and doctrines in Korean society; this legacy remains a fundamental part of Korean society, shaping the country's moral system, way of life, and social relations (Chung and Jung 2014, 1349). One of the five moral codes of Confucianism, the "order between elder and younger" (Yum 1987, 74), or "respect for age," plays a significant role in determining the rank of people of different ages, shaping ageism in Korean society (Jambor 2009, 13).

Korean society today emphasizes a rigid respect for ancestors, age, and seniority, albeit to a lesser degree than in the past. Respect toward elders shapes age norms and social expectations for specific age groups. For example, older people are socially expected to behave in a gentle and respectable manner. Elderly Koreans would perhaps feel pressured to behave in an age-appropriate manner by exhibiting a mature personality characterized by wisdom and decent, gentle, and respectable conduct. Older adults who reveal a personal desire for enjoyment are perceived by Korean society as embarrassing themselves. To that extent, BDR's elderly fans may restrain their desire to participate in pleasurable and cheerful activities because of societal ageism and what are considered age norms.

Further, older fans' generational experience may diminish their fan activity. The concept of a "generation" implies that a demographic group tends to manifest similar attitudes or stances toward entertainment because of its shared experience. For example, middle-aged fans, like *samchon* fans and *imo* fans, belong to the *sinsedae* (new generation) whose members spent their childhood in the 1990s—a period in which the fandom phenomenon rapidly grew with the development of the K-pop idol and digital technology. As primary beneficiaries of the democracy achieved by the previous generation, the *sinsedae* experienced a heavy immersion in a popular culture fostered by the availability of videos, televisions, computers, and the Internet. Members of this generation had plentiful opportunities to access popular culture and to engage in participatory fan culture at a younger age.

Contemporary teenagers inherited pop culture capital from their

predecessors, the *sinsedae*. As descendants of the *sinsedae*, contemporary teenagers have achieved even more opportunities to accumulate cultural capital as Korea has since the 1990s continuously focused on developing its cultural industry. When the 1997 financial and economic crisis swept the country, Korea began to embrace the cultural industry as a vehicle for breaking through toward economic recovery (I. Kang 2015). In this context, today's teenagers have been provided with full access to advanced popular culture and the online networks.

BDR's elderly fans in their fifties, sixties, and seventies have different generational experiences from teenage and middle-aged fans. The older population are dubbed the *saneophwa sedae* (industrialization generation), as they grew up in the 1960s and 1970s, an era of accelerated industrialization. The military regime of Park Chung-hee built a state-led-development framework that demanded high-intensity labor and long work hours (J. Lee et al. 2002; Ryu 2010). In the 1960s, the work week gradually extended to 55 hours, even while the work week in developed countries was 40 hours (J. Lee et al. 2002). In context, this intimates that the elderly fans of BDR lived under social conditions that prioritized labor and economic development over entertainment.

The entertainment industry undeniably developed in the wake of the rapid industrialization and urbanization of the 1960s and 1970s. However, the degree of its development was extremely slow and it is hardly comparable to the entertainment of today. At that time, popular music singers and musicians were not highly celebrated either; they were called *ttanttara*, a word derived from their low status (E. Lee 2016, 96). Because the cultural industry was not yet full-fledged and digital technology was not available, members of the *saneophwa sedae* had few opportunities of accessing advanced popular culture in the 1960s and 1970s. Thus, they rarely had the opportunity to cultivate cultural tastes and to accumulate popular cultural capital. This is supported by Lee Dongyeon's research, which argues that popular cultural capital began to form in Korea in the 1980s and 1990s (2009, 99).

In effect, the fan activity of older fans does not reach the level of teenage and middle-aged fans. Younger-aged fans avidly support their favorite stars



by spending a significant amount of money to express their feelings for their stars. They pay for plane tickets and hotels to attend concerts abroad, in addition to purchasing albums, magazines, and other goods.<sup>9</sup> Idol fans who maintain loyalty to their stars pay to download digital music files and purchase albums despite the introduction of streaming services and the spread of illegal downloads (J. Kim 2015, 84). They also pay steep prices for *jogong*, for which they are socially challenged and ridiculed (J. Kim 2015, 80). *Jogong* is a Korean word denoting the tribute formerly paid by tributary states to a more powerful state in traditional times, but in Korean fan culture, the term refers to a gift that fans give their favorite stars. This usage arose when fans jokingly considered themselves tributaries, having to present *jogong* to a more powerful state—that is, their beloved stars.<sup>10</sup>

Unlike younger fans, however, the elderly fans of BDR tend to be grudging with money. They gush over BDR, a YouTube star whose performances they can freely watch with just an Internet connection and without worry over membership or subscription fees. Even in the venues of BDR's shows, the elderly fans do not pay; they do not need to, since her performances are shown free at local festivals and marketplaces. The elderly fans only tip her around \$10 dollars as *yeotgap* (the price of taffy) (ID: Pumbajjang). Audience tips are part of BDR's *pumba* performance; she performs with the tips attached to a belt around her waist. Given that cash is not the type of gift that requires much thought, time, or energy to prepare, it seems that her fans are not as intensely generous toward their star as

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9. They also spend large amounts of money to purchase duplicate copies of their idol's albums because each album comes with a randomized photo card and they wish to acquire their favorite band member's photo card. "When Fans Spent Ridiculous Amounts of Money for K-pop Idols," *Kpopmap*, June 15, 2019. <https://www.kpopmap.com/when-fans-spent-ridiculous-amounts-of-money-for-kpop-idols/>.

10. It is known that teenage fans spend a significant amount of money for *jogong*, to the degree that the term *jogong alba* was even newly coined to refer to the act of taking on a part-time job solely to save money to buy gifts for idol stars. *Jogong* items once mainly included snacks and beverages, but as competition between fan clubs intensified, teenage fans have been known to give luxury items, including laptops, cameras, and even catering services. Park Sui, "K-pop Subculture 'Jogong' Sparks Dispute," *Korea Herald*, April 24, 2013. <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20130424000710>.

younger fans of K-pop idols.

Compared with younger fans who generally dedicate themselves to fan activity, elderly fans are indifferent to their activity. Extent studies have found that idol fans devote considerable time and energy to fan activity (S. Kim and D. Yang 2013). Teenage fans are known to watch videos, attend concerts, and monitor news articles and related materials to compile knowledge concerning their stars (M. Lee 2013, 28–29). So-called *sasaeng paen* (hardcore fan) sacrifice sleep to dedicate more time to stalk their favorite celebrities 24/7, even following them to their homes, agencies, and hair salon appointments. They are not satisfied with just meeting their stars through TV shows and concerts (M. Lee 2013; J. Kim 2015, 80). However, there have been no reports of elderly fans pursuing BDR 24/7 to their stars' home or beauty salon.

The characteristics of elderly fan behavior may derive from how they think of their star. Younger fans tend to hero-worship their stars with a perfect and hyper-real imagery. Even the younger fans who have taken on the roles of supporters or producers of their favorite audition participants idolize their stars (SooAh Kim 2010; Hyun Gyung Kim 2016; S. Kim and D. Yang 2013). In the earlier cited research study by Kim and Yang, an interview participant described as a middle-aged female fan of a male star wannabe, states that she has spent a large amount of money on him, but she never felt it equal in worth to the money spent on her husband (2013, 61–63). BDR's elderly fans adore her, but they seldom look up to their star, nor do they place her on a pedestal. How elderly fans think of their star is observed in the way those elderly fans never scream or shout at their star's performances. BDR does not present a perfect persona meant to draw in reverent fans. Instead, elderly fans enjoy BDR's comfortable manner.

The small scale of the elderly fan community may derive from their lack of digital capital. Fandom studies have found that digital technology enables fans to participate in cultural production, circulation, and consumption on a different level. Contemporary teenagers, dubbed “digital natives,” expanded their interests in contacting and building relations with others through web-based interactions and communications (Jiyoung Lee 2018; Jeehaeng Lee 2019; Hong 2013). They use all social media platforms, such as YouTube,

Twitter, and Facebook (Dong-bei Lee 2019a; 2019b), to communicate with their stars and other fans. Digital technology is an essential part of their life experiences as they spend a significant amount of time on online activities (Dong-bei Lee 2019a; 2019b). However, the older populations in their fifties, sixties and seventies grew up prior to the development of full-fledged digital technology. Although they currently use digital technology, there is the possibility that the older populations use it only as a tool, rather than being immersed in it.

Scholars have also found that fans enhance membership bonds in their fan community through collective activities (B. Kang et al. 2018; S. Kim and D. Yang 2013).<sup>11</sup> As younger fans dedicate themselves to their star, they spend considerable time collectively performing fan activities, furthering the bond between fan community members (B. Kang et al. 2018; S. Kim and D. Yang 2013). However, elderly fans lack the shared experience that fosters strong community ties because they do not spend as much time and energy on fan activities as do younger fans.

Based on these observations, may we claim that elderly fans are less assertive than younger fans due to their age, the social expectations of their age, and the lack of cultural and digital capital in their generational experience? May we provide a conceptual framework for understanding the main characteristics of the older populations' "stingy" and "sluggish" fandom? We may not do so if we examine how older fans produce pleasure and self-esteem through their fan activities.

### *Production of Pleasure and Self-esteem*

Some people would regard BDR as a cheesy B-list performer—a countrified imitator—since her repertoire consists only of outdated pop songs from the 1970s and 1980s and trot songs. Trot music, also called *ppongjak*, is traditionally viewed poorly because of its unsophisticated rhythm and

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11. The *samchon* fan appears to be an exception in that there has been no research focusing on the community bond between *samchon* fans.

earthly content (Won 1991).<sup>12</sup> Alongside her trot songs, BDR plays the *jangu*, a traditional Korean musical instrument, and a cymbal, a Western instrument, transgressing canonical musical practices. She also sets her songs at a tempo twice as fast as the songs' original versions. Her crude banter between songs might have influenced her status as a YouTube star; she rarely appears on TV shows that employ a higher censorship standard. Her quips are humorous and satirical as well as cringeworthy.

Despite this, elderly fans adore her, aesthetically distinguishing her from other entertainers and performers. They call her *yein*, masterful artist of Korean traditional music and dance. On the bulletin board of the fan café, an elderly fan (ID: Gwangjangdaek) relates that they were introduced to BDR by their acquaintances who shared link to BDR's YouTube videos on KakaoTalk (a free instant messaging application for mobile and desktop platforms). They subscribed to the YouTube channel and expanded their digital technology use by switching to an unlimited smart phone data plan to extend their viewing time. As is generally known that fans find more pleasure in connecting with other fans than in consuming media content about stars alone (Ferris and Harris 2011; Jenkins 1992), Gwangjangdaek joined the fan community to communicate with others with the same interests and tastes.

On the bulletin board, elderly fans often express their emotional attachment to their real masterful artist. They leave comments, like "BDR touched my heart" (ID: Eunsol♡), "I always feel better when I am with BDR" (ID: Jeolbongyi), "I found my life thanks to BDR" (ID: Yejeong), and "I get energy from BDR's songs" (ID: Gapboo). Fans express that watching BDR's spirited, humorous performances energizes them and helps them overcome difficulties in their lives, such as illness or loss of family members. They reveal that their main topic of conversations with peers revolves around BDR instead of around their children. Typically, Korean elders place a high priority on their family to the extent that there is a saying that the

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12. Trot is a music genre that emerged from the influence of Japanese *enka* during the Japanese colonial period and survived even after Korea's liberation. The genre was also secured by the grassroots public during the dissolution of agricultural communities in the industrialization period of the 1960s and 1970s (C. Kim 2012).

elderly have nothing to talk about except for their children. These elderly fans, however, share BDR-related interests and emotions with one another.

In their adoration of the *pumba* performer, the fans reinforce their identity. They call BDR *yein* for *seomin* (a master artist for ‘commoners’). To be more precise, the Korean term *yein* refers to a masterful musician and dancer from the lowest class who performed for commoners in the Joseon dynasty era (Ji 2017, 212). As a *pumba*, an itinerant street entertainer begging for food and money, BDR does not represent an artist of noble birth. Her stage is a modest one, unelevated by high-quality lighting and sound effects. Her performances are held without change in live venues; they are unavailable via mainstream media and TV but accessible on YouTube. To that extent, the title of *yein* suits BDR well. She is not a star for the elites, but her humble audience of ordinary people.

This consideration of BDR as their representative signifies that they regard themselves as members of *seomin*. The term *seomin* refers to the Joseon dynasty period’s commoners, who did not possess socio-political power or authority. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the term referred to ordinary people of low income and wealth (Jongmyung Lee 2017, 121–123). However, there is more to the fans’ self-proclaimed status as *seomin*. The elderly fans believe that they garner social respect by identifying themselves as ordinary people of low income. That is because the term *seomin* evokes connotations of good, reliable people with a strong work ethic. This idea of themselves manifests in the narrative of their representative, BDR, which they routinely recreate and circulate through the café: “Despite her unusual talent, misfortune tragically forced her to beg for food at markets and feasts for seventeen years in anonymity. By following a *pumba* troupe and clinging to her hope, she earnestly worked her way through her hardships to eventual success” (ID: Nohanel).

BDR was a largely unknown performer until, after twelve years of effort, she was plucked from obscurity thanks to the YouTube streaming she initiated in 2016 (from the interview with BDR).<sup>13</sup> Elderly fans mention her

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13. BDR, interview by authors, via the text message system of the BDR fan café, January 6, 2021.

life with overtones of awe and praise over her determination to polish her performance skills. They also believe that the life of BDR, the self-made star, is parallel to theirs: saturated with suffering from a young age, passing through an industrialization period ruled by the military junta. A fan café member (ID: Elephant) states that they can relate to BDR and the shared experience of shed blood, sweat, and tears.

Older people are often stereotyped as being socially isolated. However, the elderly fans of BDR participate in interactions with fellow fan community members. On the bulletin board, Elephant states that they joined the community because they had been frustrated by offensive comments left on BDR's YouTube videos by her critics, such as "BDR is too materialistic," and "she is a puppet of capitalism." Elephant continues to relate that they were so happy to discover the fan café, a gathering place for those with shared interests. Elephant immediately joined the community to share their emotional attachment to the star with other fans and develop amiable companionship.

Elderly fans state that they have enhanced community bonds by sharing fan-crafted works with one another. Media scholars have noted how fandom fosters a gift economy—non-monetary and non-profitable gift exchanges (Duffett 2013; Jenkins 2006). In other words, fans produce creative works, photos, videos, costumes, art, and more and provide them for others' enjoyment without the expectation of monetary compensation. Instead of monetary value, fans receive emotional rewards, such as reputation, popularity, empathy, and a sense of belonging—some of the elements that fuel human relationships. Even BDR fans organized a gift economy amongst themselves. In one example, a fan café member (ID: Dongsan) shares that they purchased a high-quality digital camera, learned how to use it, honed their photography skills, and eventually produced photos of BDR for café members' enjoyment, without requiring monetary compensation.

Elderly fans also participate in other offline collective activities that strengthen their relationships. They travel together on the same bus to BDR's performances in local areas. They chant cheering slogans together and clap to the beat of her music. They even dress identically in orange T-shirts and sunglasses. An older person wearing a bright orange uniform is an unusual

sight since older adults tend to wear more subtle tones and colors. Still, the fans chose orange for their uniform because of its “vibrancy.”<sup>14</sup> A pair of sunglasses, another item symbolic of young people, boosts fan activity’s vividness. The sunglasses have another purpose, as ID Coffee Mix revealed, “the sunglasses hide our identity while we dance and enjoy ourselves” at the live venues. Since BDR’s performances are filmed and streamed on YouTube, it is even more critical for older fans to protect their identity.

As mentioned above, Korea emphasizes rigid respect for ancestors, age, and seniority, which shapes strict age norms. In the Korean context, older people are socially expected to exhibit decent, gentle, and respectable behaviors. Accordingly, a typical older person would feel embarrassed and undignified to be seen enjoying a low form of entertainment like BDR’s performances. Elderly fans dressing identically in vibrant colors while dancing and swaying their hips to upbeat music in public venues could be viewed as improper and embarrassing. However, elderly fans enjoy the delightful atmosphere of BDR’s performances and take pleasure in participating in entertaining fan activities. In doing so, the fans resist physical ossification and transgress cultural norms. Such transgressive and liberating acts provide them with a sense of freedom, empowerment, and pleasure.

## Discussion and Concluding Remarks

Fandom is a common element of popular culture and reflects subordinate social groupings’ cultural tastes, particularly those disempowered by any combination of gender, age, class, and race (Fiske 1992). In Korea, fandom is one of the main research subjects of media cultural studies. Prior research studies extended the range of age and gender from teenage female fans to middle-aged men and women and examined fan groups’ distinctive features based on demographic factors. This study addresses the fandom of older

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14. BDR, interview by authors, via the text message system of the BDR fan café, January 6, 2021.

generations—fans in their fifties, sixties, and seventies—which has been previously overlooked by academia due to the attention given to the mass of young K-pop fans. Among the cohorts, this study focuses on those who have displayed deep emotional attachments to the YouTube star, BDR.

By examining the main characteristics of the older population's fandom, this study has reached two conclusions. First, the Korean fandom landscape is changing as that society's population is ageing. In Korea, fandom was traditionally viewed as a cultural marker for teenagers. Following the emergence of the second generation of K-pop idols in the mid-2000s, however, fandom's gender and age spectrum diversified to include middle-aged men and women. With their financial stability, these middle-aged fans assumed a new role as "supporters" of younger stars, distinguishing themselves from teenage fans, known as "followers" of stars. Meanwhile, the newly emerged TV audition shows and the development of digital technology have opened a new era of K-pop fandom, where fan activism became more assertive and energetic. The role of fans shifted, from that of follower and supporter to "producer" of their stars. Furthermore, fans' activities have gone beyond the realm of entertainment and inspired a wave of social activism.

However, the elderly fans of BDR exhibit different behavior from younger fans. They tend to be relatively parsimonious with their money and time. Unlike younger fans, who spend money and time to attend concerts, engage in *jogong* activity, and practice donation activism, among other things, elderly fans do not even pay to watch BDR's performances, which are shown for free at regional festivals. They only pay *yeotgap*, a small tip for BDR's performance. Some of the fans access BDR's performances through YouTube, a cost-effective platform that does not require membership or subscription fees. Neither do elderly fans devote much time and energy to fan activity. While younger fans monitor all news articles related to their stars, even sacrificing sleep to free up more time to do so, elderly fans do not dedicate themselves in such a way to fan activity. To this extent, the elderly fans are distinguished by the concept of a "stingy" and "sluggish" fandom.

These characteristics of elderly fandom show signs of discord within Korean fandom. Fandom does not have a single uniform complexion but



various facets. The stingy and sluggish characteristics of the older population's fandom are possibly driven by three factors surrounding elderly fans: their age, social expectations for older people, and their generational experience. Age may affect fan activity because with ageing, physical strength, cognitive functions, and emotional excitement decline (Hosun Lee 2010). The elderly may also tone down their fan activity's fervor because hiding or reducing the personal desire for enjoyment is considered virtuous for older adults. Their generational experience's lack of cultural and digital capital might also serve to diminish the scope of their fan activity. Thus, to grasp fandom's distinctive features, it is necessary to consider multiple factors, including the age, social expectation, and generational experience of the fandom participants.

Second, this article articulates a way of ageing in Korean society, different from the typical depictions of older people. The elderly are often viewed as physically limited or as sources of wisdom. However, this study shows other aspects of the older population: their entertainment choices and the activities they participate in. By watching rollicking *pumba* performances and listening to bawdy jokes, the elderly fans acquire the power and energy to overcome difficulties in their lives. They also find pleasure in traveling together with other fans to the venues of BDR's performances, chanting cheering slogans together and clapping to the music's beat. In dressing identically in vibrant colors and dancing in public, the elderly fans transgress the age norms traditionally emphasized in Korea. Through these transgressive and liberating acts, they find empowerment and freedom.

The elderly fans of BDR also build self-esteem through their fan activity. They call BDR, *yein* for *seomin*—"a master artist for commoners"—demonstrating how they consider BDR their representative and identify themselves as members of the *seomin*. Despite specifying themselves as members of a humble public with low income and wealth, the connotation of *seomin* reveals their belief that they deserve social respect for their industrious aspects. This belief legitimizes their fan behavior as well as improves their self-esteem.

In conclusion, adoring a star, finding pleasure through a kitschy form of entertainment, and building self-esteem through collective fan activity is

part of the older populations' life in Korea. Rather than only exhibiting wisdom and depth, these elderly fans fervently subscribe to the YouTube videos of *pumba* performances and share their emotional attachment to the performer. Instead of only displaying physical and emotional helplessness and vulnerability, they occupy the space between the performance stage and the audience seats in regional festivals, dancing and swaying their hips to the cheerful rhythm. With these findings, this study contributes to enriching discussions on ageing in Korea.

However, it is worth noting here that BDR's fans do not fully represent elderly Korean fans in general. As mentioned above, TV programs are doubling down on trot-music shows, expanding the list of entertainment options for the older populations.<sup>15</sup> Trot audition shows air frequently and trot music singers regularly appear in advertisements, leading to the emergence of an older population fandom that adores trot singers.<sup>16</sup> Among the fandom groups, the fan-based organization AGAIN, devoted to trot singer Song Ga-in has 57,000 members and six regional branches. The elderly fans of Song are known to devote their time and money to their star. Listening to Song's music all day long, they spend money on their star, who they believe energizes their life.

Learning from the fandom activity of younger fans, the elderly fans of Song created their own full-fledged fandom culture, which is more extravagant than BDR's. For example, this fan club has its own guidebook to guide newcomers about using streaming music services and clicking "like" on SNS as a way to promote her music videos. These elderly fans are willing

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15. Most of the avid fans of trot-music signers are in their fifties and sixties, but trot singers' popularity is not limited to the older generations (Lee Sun-young, "Hot to Trot, Oldest Style of Korean Pop Undergoing Resurgence," *Korea Herald*, December 6, 2019, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20191205000771>).

16. It has been said that the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic had an unexpected impact on the "trot music syndrome." Popular trot singers, who used to make money performing in local festivals and marketplaces around the country, started appearing on the TV screen as the pandemic cancelled most festivals and events (Im Eun-byel, 'Hot to Trot: Singers Reign Supreme on Korean Small Screen,' *Korea Herald*, December 23, 2020, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20201223000285>).

to pay out of pocket for public advertisements, just like K-pop idol fandom.<sup>17</sup> They have even created fan fiction (fanfic). The fanfic, titled “A 63-year-old fan’s story,” portrays the warm feelings of the elderly toward Song and the story of an elderly fan, who had difficulties using streaming services and gained help from others to enjoy Song’s music.<sup>18</sup>

Song’s fandom has also donated to charity. Just as younger fans have done, Song’s fans donate to the needy and volunteer at social welfare centers. K-pop idol fans have fostered and expanded volunteer work and donations in cooperation with environmental, educational, and social welfare organizations. They perform various good deeds to create good images for their stars (J. Kim 2015, 86). The older fans of Song donated 55.4 million won (about 1,400 people participated) to the national disaster relief association, Huimang Beulijji (Hope Bridge), to help victims of a torrential downpour. This new scene of the older populations’ assertive fan activity awaits further analysis.

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17. Im Eun-byel, “Hot to Trot: Singers Reign Supreme on Korean Small Screen,” *Korea Herald*, December 23, 2020. <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20201223000285>.

18. Lim Ryeonkyung, “The New World of Song Ga-in’s Fandom,” *Money Today*, October 7, 2019. <https://news.mt.co.kr/mtview.php?no=2019100708317276586>.

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