

**PERCEIVED IMPACT OF BTS' 'LOVE MYSELF' CAMPAIGN IN THE LIVES OF
MALAYSIAN ENGAGED FANS**

JUNG BO EUN

**MASTER OF COMMUNICATION
FACULTY OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES
UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN
JUNE 2023**

**PERCEIVED IMPACT OF BTS' 'LOVE MYSELF' CAMPAIGN IN THE LIVES OF
MALAYSIAN ENGAGED FANS**

By

JUNG BO EUN

A dissertation submitted to the Department of Media,
Faculty of Creative Industries,
Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman,
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Communication
June 2023

ABSTRACT

PERCEIVED IMPACT OF BTS' 'LOVE MYSELF' CAMPAIGN IN THE LIVES OF MALAYSIAN ENGAGED FANS

JUNG BO EUN

This qualitative study, guided by Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (SDT), focused on the perceived impact of BTS' 'Love Myself' campaign in the lives of Malaysian engaged fans. Celebrities play a powerful role in promoting values to public opinions however, they are often glamorized, and the limelight is often stolen from the campaign. With the rise of popularity of Korean-pop especially the Korean boy band named BTS, they launched a campaign with UNICEF called the 'Love Myself' campaign. The campaign focuses on in terms of purpose and desire to help oneself to empower themselves to gain self-respect and true love that they can share with the rest of the world. Previous studies conducted on celebrity-led campaigns lacked the perspective on the recipients of the campaign. With the launch of the 'Love Myself' campaign, it showed significant estimated funding and outreach due to the fame of BTS. Given the phenomenon of the campaign and the lack of audiences' perspective, a qualitative investigation was conducted by using face-to-face interviews. The researcher used purposive sampling and recruited 11 male and female participants who are Malaysian ARMY young adults located in Klang Valley and who had participated in the 'Love Myself' campaign. Data were analysed using thematic analysis deductive approach where concepts and topics were constructed and arranged according to the research questions and research objectives. The research questions were drawn using the three basic human psychological needs of SDT: competence, relatedness, and autonomy. The interview questions were constructed from the three needs and tackled the three research objectives. Study findings displayed an in-depth

understanding on the perspective of the Malaysian engaged fans who had taken part in the ‘Love Myself’ campaign by BTS and was able to share a wide audience-focused perspective on the perceived impact of the ‘Love Myself’ campaign.

Keywords: BTS, ARMY, ‘Love Myself’ Campaign, Celebrity-led Campaigns, Self-Determination Theory

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Praise God in His sanctuary. It is by His mercy and grace that I have the honour to complete this work. He has sustained me through the wilderness. I am grateful to my family for their continuous love and support. I am left with nothing but gratitude for everyone who has been with me throughout this entire journey.

I want to thank my supervisors, Dr. Ngeow Yeok Meng and Dr. Lim Soo Jin. Their unfailing patience and kindness have brought me through this entire process, and I am grateful that they had not given up on me. I am thankful to the UTAR IPSR and DISS team for helping and supporting me for my studies to be complete.

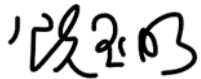
I am thankful for all the participants who took part in my research. I am honoured to bring an insight towards the topic of Korean-Pop and BTS. I am thankful that I can shed a light towards ARMY and their role in the Love Myself campaign.

To God be the glory forever and ever. Amen. Soli Deo Gloria.

APPROVAL SHEET

This dissertation entitled “**PERCEIVED IMPACT OF BTS’ ‘LOVE MYSELF’ CAMPAIGN IN THE LIVES OF MALAYSIAN ENGAGED FANS**” was prepared by JUNG BO EUN and submitted as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Communication (Structure B) at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman.

Approved by:



(Asst. Prof. Dr. NGEOW YEOK MENG)
Assistant Professor/Main Supervisor
Department of General Studies
Faculty of Creative Industries
Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman

Date: 2nd June 2023



(Dr. LIM SOO JIN)
Lecturer/Co-supervisor
Department of Media
Faculty of Creative Industries
Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman

Date: 2nd June 2023

FACULTY OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES
UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN

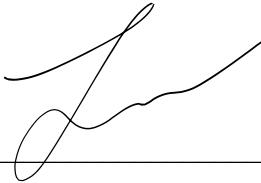
Date: 2nd June 2023

SUBMISSION OF DISSERTATION

It is hereby certified that **Jung Bo Eun** (ID No: **1800UJM735**) has completed this dissertation entitled “PERCEIVED IMPACT OF BTS’ ‘LOVE MYSELF’ CAMPAIGN IN THE LIVES OF MALAYSIAN ENGAGED FANS” under the supervision of Dr. Ngeow Yeok Meng (Supervisor) from the Department of General Studies, Faculty of Creative Industries, and Dr. Lim Soo Jin (Co-Supervisor) from the Department of Media, Faculty of Creative Industries.

I understand that the University will upload a softcopy of my dissertation in pdf format into UTAR Institutional Repository, which may be made accessible to UTAR community and public.

Yours truly,



(Jung Bo Eun)

DECLARATION

I, Jung Bo Eun, hereby declare that the dissertation is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UTAR or other institutions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' followed by 'B' and 'E' in a cursive script.

(JUNG BO EUN)

Date: 2nd June 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
APPROVAL SHEET	vi
SUBMISSION SHEET	vii
DECLARATION	viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ix
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xiii
CHAPTER 1.....	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Problem Statement.....	3
1.3 Research Objectives.....	6
1.4 Research Questions.....	6
1.5 Significance of the Study.....	6
1.6 Definitions	7
1.7 Scope of the Study	9
CHAPTER 2.....	11
LITERATURE REVIEW	11
2.1 Literature Review	11
2.1.1 Celebrity-led Campaigns.....	11
2.1.2 Korean pop (K-pop)	13
2.1.3 BTS.....	14
2.1.4 ‘Love Myself’ Campaign: Its Origin and Significance.....	15
2.2 Theoretical Framework.....	16
2.2.1 Self-Determination Theory	16
2.2.1.1 Competence.....	17
2.2.1.2 Relatedness.....	17
2.2.1.3 Autonomy.....	18
2.3 Conceptual Framework.....	18

CHAPTER 3.....	21
METHODOLOGY	21
3.1 Research Design and Research Paradigm.....	21
3.2 Location of the Study and Population	22
3.3 Purposive Sampling	23
3.4 Research Instrument	23
3.5 Validity and Reliability.....	25
3.6 Ethical Consideration.....	27
3.7 Data Collection	28
3.8 Data Analysis.....	31
CHAPTER 4.....	33
RESEARCH FINDINGS	33
4.1 Competence	33
4.1.1 Skills	33
4.1.2 Self-Regulating Behaviours.....	37
4.1.3 Seek Learning	39
4.2 Relatedness	40
4.3 Autonomy	47
4.4 Case Studies.....	51
CHAPTER 5.....	55
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....	55
5.1 Discussion.....	55
5.2 Implications	61
5.3 Limitations of the Study	62
5.4 Recommendation for Future Research	62
5.5 Conclusion	63
REFERENCES	65
APPENDICES.....	69
Appendix A.....	69
Appendix B.....	71
Appendix C.....	73

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Demographic Information of the Interviewees	29

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Conceptual Framework of the impact of the <i>Love Myself</i> campaign	19
2	Sub-themes of competence	56
3	Analysis of relatedness	58
4	The process of autonomy	59

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ARMY	Adorable Representative M.C. for Youth
BTS	Bangtan Sonyeondan; Bulletproof Scout Boys; Beyond the Scene
M.C.	Master of Ceremonies
SDT	Self-Determination Theory
TA	Thematic Analysis
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Education Fund
UTAR	Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Humanitarian activism particularly campaigns attached to celebrities are conventional in this era of the digital age which started prominently around the 2000s. These celebrities are often used as a marketing communication rather than a humanitarian approach to such campaigns. Celebrities are used as a marketing tool as they generally influence the engaged audiences of the campaign socially, politically, and economically, which are commonly their fans, hence making the messages of the campaign easy to spread (Brockington, 2021; Budabin, 2020; Doyle et al., 2017; Lim & Moufahim, 2015; Menga & Goodman, 2022; Richey & Brockington, 2020; Silk et al., 2017).

The perception of celebrities showing support and participation in any campaigns depict them as doing something that is a part of their job description as it has become more common for celebrities to advocate in something. The term ‘celebrity advocacy’ refers literally to stand up for and advocating for something as well as to take part on any kind of activities which support the campaign or other advocates part of that campaign (Richey & Brockington, 2020). Celebrities have a “powerful role to play” when it comes to promoting values to public opinions (Lim & Moufahim, 2015, p. 540) as their way of effecting changes is like the “way of doing politics” (Brockington & Henson, 2015, p. 432). Celebrities have a connection with the public where there is intimacy formed through empathy between the celebrities and their fans (Katayama, 2021). Therefore, celebrities advocating a humanitarian purpose often steal the limelight from the cause of the campaign. The celebrities glamorize the celebrity figure and completely erases the aid recipients of the campaign (Lim & Moufahim, 2015). From the

campaigner's point of view, this may be a strategic move as the celebrities capture the attention of the audiences not just through their power and influence but through their ability to connect emotionally and as a fellow human who is trustworthy (Doyle et al., 2017; Katayama, 2021; Silk et al., 2017). Past research which focused on finding the impact of the celebrity-led campaigns were more on criticism rather than favouritism in the involvement of celebrities due to statements written above (Brockington, 2021; Hopkinson & Cronin, 2015; Silk et al., 2017).

One of the well-established celebrity-led campaigns that has received global recognition is from a Korean boy band named BTS which is the abbreviation of Bangtan Sonyeondan which translates to Bulletproof Scout Boys in Korean. BTS has gained massive popularity all over the world and they were able to gain this popularity through their music that features themes that focus on social awareness and generational uneasiness which are considered as taboos by the public but draws “emotional relevance” towards their music (Chang & Park, 2018, p. 273). The popularity of BTS globally was at its peak when BTS won the award for Top Social Artist in the Billboard Music Award for two consecutive years since 2017 (Jung, 2018). The Top Social Artist is awarded to an artist with the greatest number of fan votes, and it was formerly won by Justin Bieber for six years in a row. In 2017, BTS recorded more than 5.9 million followers on their Twitter account where every tweet gets at least 100,000 to over 300,000 retweets (Herman, 2018). The fan base for BTS is called ARMY which is an acronym that stands for Adorable Representative M.C. for Youth (Bruner, 2018b). The naming of BTS fans also implies ‘army’ with undivided loyalty towards BTS.

Through BTS’ involvement in inspiring people to speak of love and to share hope, a campaign coined as ‘Love Myself’ was officially launched in November 2017 with a two-year duration that is scheduled to end by November 2019. This initiative has prompted BTS to make the United Nations International Children Education Fund (UNICEF) the appropriate partner to the ‘Love Myself’ campaign especially with their launched #ENDviolence campaign back

in 2013 (UNICEF, 2013). Both BTS and UNICEF shared the same cause of supporting young people so that their future can be different (*About LOVE MYSELF*, n.d.). The aim of the #ENDviolence campaign revolves around childhood violence, sexual violence, and violence at school. It is statistically alarming that a child dies in every five minutes because of violence; 10% of girls suffer from sexual violence; whilst 30% students are regularly faced with a bully at school (UNICEF, 2017). This aim has a common interest with the values that the ‘Love Myself’ campaign is pursuing where they are raising funds so that it can be used to protect and support children and teen victims of domestic and school violence as well as sexual assault around the world by providing education as well as support to the local communities for violence prevention (*#ENDviolence*, n.d.).

The ‘Love Myself’ campaign branches further in terms of purpose and desire to help oneself to empower their themselves to gain self-respect and true love that they can share with the rest of the world as they are not given a fair share of chances to dream of a healthy future. With this love and care, the ‘Love Myself’ campaign intents to create a safe place and a better place where people will be able to dream of tomorrow (*Love Myself*, n.d.). It may seem simple from a glance, but it takes more than just courage and wisdom to be able to ‘love myself’. People engaged in addictive or violent behaviours do not love themselves. People who commit suicide or hurt themselves physically or mentally do not love themselves enough. People who do not seek help despite living in abuse and violence need to love themselves more.

1.2 Problem Statement

Celebrity-led campaigns often yield better results in raising awareness amongst the public and the audiences. However, too much focus on the celebrities can lead to the blurring of the objectives of such campaigns, as audiences re-direct their attention to the celebrities

instead of achieving the campaign objectives. There is lack of audience-focused research (Brockington, 2021; Brockington & Henson, 2015; Doyle et al., 2017). As an intended outcome of the campaign, the public does take the initiative to mimic celebrities. Nevertheless, it would be important and interesting to know whether they are mimicking the celebrity's behaviour because they truly believe in supporting the notion or appeal of such campaign or is it merely on the fact that 'the celebrities are doing it'? It is uncertain whether the right outcome and actions are done by the public after a well-raised level of awareness by the celebrities. Hence this study focuses on why and how the targeted audience is impacted in celebrity-led campaign via a change in self-perception that leads to changes in their behaviour.

The celebrity-led campaign of this study refers to the 'Love Myself' campaign initiated by BTS, the first Korean pop group to speak at the United Nations when they launched a new agenda with UNICEF called 'Generation Unlimited'. The reason on why BTS was invited to speak at the UN General Assembly was because the 'Love Myself' campaign had the same values with the 'Generation Unlimited' agenda which aims to "uncover the unlimited potential of young people" (Cha, 2018). The Executive Director of UNICEF even referred BTS as the "incredible advocates for young people around the world" for speaking at the UN General Assembly that kindled an inspiring message to youths around the world (Cha, 2018).

There are various ways that ARMY showed active support to humanitarian causes, and it is viewed as an overall movement to show the dedication to BTS and to support the 'Love Myself' campaign (Magcamit, 2018). How much of this dedication by ARMY can be displayed as true support for the 'Love Myself' campaign? Or is there a possibility that they are supporting until the period of the 'Love Myself' campaign comes to an end? Could it be possible that BTS could fall into the category where fans are only dedicated because BTS is a part of this campaign? If it was, would UNICEF state BTS to be a great advocate for young people if it is only for a short time frame? There are more questions than answers provided in

this topic of BTS and their 'Love Myself' campaign and this research aims to find the genuine dedication and the impact of the 'Love Myself' campaign that they are making for the fans and vice versa. Therefore, the actions that are done by the public, which in this case are ARMY, can be looked upon so that there will be a clear understanding on what kind of outcome of actions are coming from the messages and agenda of the 'Love Myself' campaign.

When it comes to the impact of the 'Love Myself' campaign, there has been total accumulated funding of 2.4 billion won which is approximately US\$ 2 million or RM 8 million as of April 30th, 2019 (*Love Myself*, n.d.). For the outreach of the campaign through social media, one of the ways to promote the campaign is to use the hashtag #BTSLoveMyself which has been used approximately 10.5 million times as of 2019 (*Love Myself*, n.d.). Through these figures it is proven that there has been a significant distribution and success to the campaign, however, what are the contents with the usage of the hashtag? As the problem with celebrity-led campaigns has been the lack of audiences' perspective, this research focused on the contents of the hashtag by interviewing Malaysian ARMY young adults to understand what kind of impact the 'Love Myself' campaign had in their lives and to give these participants the space to voice their opinions in the realm of celebrity-led campaigns.

With a massive fanbase that BTS has, it is evident that the 'Love Myself' campaign would be targeted generally for the youths that are part of ARMY. There may be bias to choose such an obvious sample group such as ARMY however, this research aims to understand how celebrity-led campaigns impacts their audiences especially towards the ones who are directly involved with the chosen celebrities of these campaigns. It would be safe to state that the main audience for the 'Love Myself' campaign is ARMY.

1.3 Research Objectives

- RO1. To examine how ARMY perceive BTS' 'Love Myself' campaign in their lives after participating in the campaign.
- RO2. To investigate the benefits and/or the risks and challenges faced by the individual being a part of ARMY after participating in the campaign.
- RO3. To analyse how the campaign changes the mindset of ARMY towards loving themselves after participation.

1.4 Research Questions

- RQ1. How does ARMY perceive BTS' 'Love Myself' campaign in their lives after participation?
- RQ2. What are the benefits and/or the risks and challenges faced by the individual being a part of ARMY after participating in the campaign?
- RQ3. How does the campaign change the mindset of ARMY towards loving themselves after participation?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research provides insights into the realm of celebrity-led campaigns by analysing the perceived impact of BTS' 'Love Myself' campaign in the lives of ARMY. The results of the study will bring a new perspective in the range of audience-focused research as it was stated that there is a lack of audience-focused research in the realm of celebrity-led campaigns. This will benefit future studies that will investigate audience-focused research in celebrity-led campaigns through the method on what this research used to analyse the lives of Malaysian engaged fans.

As there is a complete lack of research done to look at celebrity-led campaigns in the context of Malaysia, this research will contribute and impact future research that will investigate celebrity-led campaigns in Malaysia and how it impacts the people and society, especially campaigns like the ‘Love Myself’ campaign that is of influence of a Korean boy band. It can benefit research areas that investigates the cultural aspects and lifestyle influences that the Korean culture is able to have in Malaysia as an example.

1.6 Definitions

There are several terms used in the research as follows:

- i. **Celebrity-led campaign:** Celebrities play a powerful role when it comes to promoting values to public opinions (Lim & Moufahim, 2015). One of the job description of celebrities is to advocate humanitarian campaigns which often steal the limelight from the cause or the campaign. The celebrities glamorize the celebrity figure and completely erases the aid recipients of the campaign (Lim & Moufahim, 2015).
- ii. **BTS ‘Love Myself’ campaign:** A campaign launched by BTS and collaborated with UNICEF and their #ENDviolence campaign. The campaign aims to empower individuals who participate to gain self-respect and true love that they can share with the rest of the world.
- iii. **Malaysian engaged fans:** This refers to the fandom of BTS called ARMY that is based in Malaysia.
- iv. **Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and its constructs:** It uses a concept of goal-oriented behaviour but with a different approach to it where instead of pursuing the content or outcome of the goals or the consistent processes, the theory uses the

concept of psychological needs as the motivator (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The three basic human psychological needs are: competence, relatedness, and autonomy.

- v. **Competence:** It is a need that considers the engagement and satisfaction that a person feels from learning in the new environment. If the person is forced through reinforcements or other ‘motivators’ to adapt to a new situation they are not interested in, the person will not develop new capabilities in the new environment.
- vi. **Relatedness:** Relatedness reflects on being part of society rather than a simple person behaving mechanism (Deci & Ryan, 2000). A person will organize themselves to connect and function in the social entity as well as to compete or have conflicts towards self-organization.
- vii. **Autonomy:** Autonomy reflects in the “experience of integrity, volition, and vitality” and these experiences comes accompanied by the actions of self-regulation (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 254). In other words, a person feels like they have control over their lives when they have their sets of strong principles, free will and then will obtain enthusiasm in living their lives.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This research focuses on the topic of celebrity-led campaigns in the field of humanitarianism where the usage of celebrities commonly concludes the success of these humanitarian campaigns through the total accumulated fundings and the widespread social outreach. As discussed in the background of the study, this field lacks the focus of the perspective of the audiences who are part of these humanitarian campaigns. The audiences' perspectives are usually concluded with the success of the campaigns through the numbers rather than the voice of the audiences. This research aims to highlight on the voices of the audiences who took part of the 'Love Myself' campaign launched by BTS in collaboration with UNICEF.

One-to-one interviews were conducted so that the participants can share their personal stories in-depth and length unlike other qualitative research methods like focus groups which could be limiting to the focus of this research. As the study used the purposive sampling method, there are three criteria for the selection of the participants:

1. Must be a Malaysian young adult located in Klang Valley.
2. Must be an engaged fan of BTS.
3. Must have participated in the 'Love Myself' campaign.

The interviews were conducted in-person in Malaysia with questions drawn up using the constructs from the Self-Determination Theory. All the interviews were conducted in English, and it took in between of 20 minutes up to 1 hour and 20 minutes. The interviews were conducted before the 1st of November as the campaign was initially scheduled to end as it was a two-year campaign however, it is currently still active until future notice. The interviews were conducted before the campaign initially ended so that there will be no factors that could affect the emotions of the participants regarding the campaign being over.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Celebrity-led Campaigns

There are many well-known organizations that take the initiative to make improvements to the world, especially towards people. Celebrities take part in human aiding campaigns as they not only prompt media and cultural attention, but they also mobilize actions and engagements from the audience (Brockington, 2021; Budabin, 2020; Doyle et al., 2017; Lim & Moufahim, 2015; Menga & Goodman, 2022; Richey & Brockington, 2020; Silk et al., 2017). The start of celebrity-led campaigns may not be accurate as there are an amount of well-known people who had taken part in aiding others in good causes, the first celebrity to work with UNICEF was Danny Kaye in 1954, however, celebrity advocacy “did not really develop until the present century” (Brockington, 2021, p. 254). From being the face of various movements all the way up to leading their own organizations, celebrities have expanded their participation which had allowed them to be of influence socially, politically, and economically (Budabin, 2020; Menga & Goodman, 2022). Audiences connect with the messages sent out by the celebrities representing the campaigns, not because the celebrities are extraordinary but because they are as ordinary as how the public feels (Budabin, 2020; Doyle et al., 2017; Hopkinson & Cronin, 2015). These celebrities that take part in the organizations have done explicitly to make the world a better place, but they are being disregarded as the commodification of the movement. When the organizations bring celebrities into the campaigns, the awareness rises, however, the initiation of action by the public does not occur (Silk et al., 2017). Audiences connect with the messages of celebrities when they are first

“characterized by pity and charity” towards the people in need and then when they have a “reflection of self” by having a “sense of connectivity with celebrities” (Scott, 2015, p. 463).

Celebrities have become advocates to these campaigns by not only lending their voice but also by showing support to the cause by getting involved in all the activities conducted by the campaigns (Lim & Moufahim, 2015; Richey & Brockington, 2020). Celebrity advocacy is stated to cause the public to be sympathetic to the messages if the campaign is directed towards existing supporters rather than new ones (Brockington & Henson, 2015). This situates the celebrities to be a negative factor in the humanitarianism campaigns as forced attention is brought by the public not because they are interested in the campaign but because it is a publicity strategy to ‘clickbait’ the audiences to be involved (Hopkins, 2018). Celebrity advocacy does promote engagement with the celebrities rather than the causes therefore, it is better to strategize with narrow casting where the campaign is reaching out to a more “specialized and targeted audiences” through a “more specialized media” as well (Brockington & Henson, 2015, p. 436).

The relationship that celebrities have with their fans displays the in-depth intimacy that have with each other (Katayama, 2021; Wright & Rosamond, 2021). When celebrities advocate in campaigns, it effectively brings in the participation of their fans from the pre-existing intimacy that is formed through empathy (Katayama, 2021). Katayama (2021), Wright and Rosamond (2021) emphasizes how ‘easy’ it is for fans to take part in celebrity advocacy especially with the increase utilization of social media in these campaigns which makes fans feel as though the celebrities are directly talking with them through the social media messages. Their participation is not due to blind following but in the aspiration to “suffer like they do” by mimicking celebrities’ physical and emotional expressions of sympathy (Lim & Moufahim, 2015, p. 541).

2.1.2 Korean pop (K-pop)

K-pop, which is an abbreviation for Korean pop, is a musical sensation that is originated from South Korea (Russell, 2014). As the popularity of K-pop grew expansively within the country itself, this popularity began to spread widely around Asia thus leading it to be globalized (Besley, 2018; Brown, 2019; Cho, 2017; Han, 2017; Jin & Yoon, 2016; Manticore-Griffin, 2011; Russell, 2014; Unger, 2015). With the popularity of K-pop culture becoming a phenomenon, the Korean wave, or also known as ‘hallyu’, spread like wildfire (Brown, 2019; Cho, 2017; Jin & Yoon, 2016) that led to an increase of transcultural and transnational fandoms globally (Han, 2017; Jin & Yoon, 2014). Hallyu first emerged through the success of Korean TV dramas which were widely viewed and appreciated which led to the success of K-pop artists as well. The hallyu ‘tsunami’ swept the world again as the Hallyu 2.0, where this new Korean wave is characterized by the important role of social media in producing and consuming the media. Popularity rose due to the fan base forming from international countries that allowed these fan base to engage in the culture of K-pop (Han, 2017; Jin & Yoon, 2016).

The entertainment companies in Korea have a systematic training program when it comes to training and maintaining their idols in preparation for their debut which has led them to be criticized for manufacturing and fictionalizing their idols in the entertainment industry (Cho, 2017; Manticore-Griffin, 2011). The K-pop industry is mainly dominated by three specific entertainment companies which have been established by former K-pop artists from the first generation of K-pop (Besley, 2018; Brown, 2019). They are known as the ‘Big Three’ and produces artists and groups using the “conveyor-belt process” (Besley, 2018, p. 11). Just like a factory, the ‘Big Three’ releases fully trained and skill-perfected artists only. From 1998 to 2008, only thirty K-pop artists including groups until 2009 where there was an increase in number to forty artists in total and eventually becoming more than a hundred of them by 2012 (Russell, 2014). It is essential for these artists, also referred to as idols, to have the essential

“on-point choreography, stage presence, stunning outfits and good looks” (Besley, 2018, p. 10). K-pop is highly visualized as the viewers should be able to instantly recognize the representations (Unger, 2015). Not only do these idols need to possess the vital essentials of an artist, but they are also expected to show their personalities as well which helps them connect with their fans (Besley, 2018).

2.1.3 BTS

The name BTS comes from Bangtan Sonyeondan, which is translated to Bulletproof Scout Boys, consists of seven male members aged between 22 to 26 and they made their debut showcase in June 2013 (Besley, 2018; Brown, 2019). BTS is formed by Big Hit Entertainment made by Bang Si-hyuk. CEO Bang Si-hyuk was a successful composer and producer in the K-pop industry who was working under one of the ‘Big Three’ company but left to start-up Big Hit Entertainment (Besley, 2018). Within the same year of their debut, BTS was able to slowly gain domestic recognition by winning a prestigious rookie award of ‘Best New Artist’ and ‘Rising Star’ award during the end of the year award shows successful groups were awarded previously (Besley, 2018). BTS gained stronger domestic recognition through their new album ‘Skool Luv Affair’ which went number one in the Korean music chart (Besley, 2018). Global recognition for BTS started to seep in 2016 through their ‘Wings’ album where they were able to achieve an ‘all-kill’ triumph in all eight of the Korean music charts and ranking number one on the iTunes charts of twenty-three countries (Brown, 2019). Their global recognition was confirmed when they won the ‘Top Social Artist’ award in the Billboard Music Award in USA by breaking Justin Bieber’s consecutive record of winning for six years in a row (Jung, 2018).

It is not a coincidence that BTS was able to win the ‘Top Social Artist’ award as it is awarded to an artist with the greatest number of fan votes. BTS is known to have a strong

connection with their fans through the usage of social media (Besley, 2018; Brown, 2019; Bruner, 2018a, 2018b; Jung, 2018). They managed to win the Guinness World Record for “most Twitter engagements for a music group” (Bruner, 2018a). BTS was the first Korean artist to top the American Billboard 200 with their album titled ‘Love Yourself: Tear’ and toppled first place in the charts again with another album ‘Love Yourself: Answer’ within the same year (Herman, 2018).

What makes BTS different from other K-pop groups is through many different factors. The first is the connection that they have with their fans from the beginning even before their debut and this has earned BTS their bond to their fans (Besley, 2018; Brown, 2019). BTS is permitted to participate in the production of their music which allows them to bring in sensitive topics like the pressures of society, being an idol, the anxieties of their generation and much more (Besley, 2018; Romano, 2019). The members are open with talking about the struggles and anxieties they face, and they share this with their fans which brings the connection between the two (Bruner, 2018b; Romano, 2019).

2.1.4 ‘Love Myself’ Campaign: Its Origin and Significance

With BTS being able to share and write their own songs from the beginning of their debut to the K-pop industry, BTS and Big Hit Entertainment was able to initiate the ‘Love Myself’ campaign with UNICEF on the 1st of November 2017 (*About LOVE MYSELF*, n.d.). Their songs were able to bring comfort to the fans which had urged the group to initiate a campaign that pursued love and a better place for everyone to live in (*About LOVE MYSELF*, n.d.). There are several records that states that BTS donates and gives back to society in times of need as well as to support even before the campaign came into being (Brown, 2019). This act of kindness was done as a group as well as individually.

In 2017, BTS started pursuing the aims of the campaign through their actions as well as through their music. The BTS albums entitled ‘Love Yourself’ specifically promotes the ‘Love Myself’ campaign and a portion of the album sales are donated to the cause and has since accumulated an estimated fund of \$1.03 million (Herman, 2018). There are various other ways on how the ‘Love Myself’ campaign can be supported. Firstly, BTS and Big Hit Entertainment pledged 500 million KRW which estimates to 440,000 USD or RM1.7 million (Brown, 2019). BTS had official merchandises made especially for the campaign and all the proceeds are given to the campaign. People can donate through the donation desks installed by UNICEF or other online websites like Kakao Give-ticon, Happybean and so on (*Support LOVE MYSELF*, n.d.). Since 2018, BTS has always had a UNICEF booth promoting the ‘Love Myself’ campaign and the #ENDviolence campaign available during their world tour (*Journey of LOVE MYSELF*, n.d.). The ‘Love Myself’ campaign had two rounds of official merchandises made and both of them were sold out (*Support LOVE MYSELF*, n.d.). Not only is the message of self-love shared, through the participation of BTS at the United Nations (UN), the message of speak yourself was motivated to encourage fans to support each other in times of need (Brown, 2019).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a macro-level theory developed by Deci and Ryan (2000) that focuses on human motivation. The theory states that there are three basic universal needs that all individuals possess: competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Chiu, 2022). According to Ryan and Deci (2000, p. 68), SDT is “an approach to human motivation and personality that uses traditional empirical methods” while focusing on human psychology especially towards personality developments and self-regulating behaviours. SDT has a

concept of goal-oriented behaviour but with a different approach to it where instead of pursuing the content or outcome of the goals or the consistent processes, the theory uses the concept of psychological needs as the motivator (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

2.2.1.1 Competence

Competence focuses on the interest of the person when it comes to adapting into new obstacles in changing situations. Basically, competence is a need that considers the engagement and satisfaction that a person feels from learning in the new environment. If the person is forced through reinforcements or other ‘motivators’ to adapt to a new situation they are not interested in, the person will not develop new capabilities in the new environment (Deci & Ryan, 2000). A person feels the need to be effective in their own efforts which will make them feel effective and capable (Krause et al., 2019).

2.2.1.2 Relatedness

Relatedness is “the need to feel belongingness and connectedness with others” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 73). Relatedness reflects on being part of society rather than a simple person behaving mechanism (Deci & Ryan, 2000). A person will organize themselves to connect and function in the social entity as well as to compete or have conflicts towards self-organization. An individual feels the need to connect socially and be integrated into a group (Krause et al., 2019). As much as an individual finds the need to fit in and ‘relate’ to other people around them, the conflict they face comes about when there is a need for autonomy.

2.2.1.3 Autonomy

Autonomy is “an extension of this deeply evolved tendency in animate life” (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 253). There is a strong need for a person to live a life where there is an action of self-regulation, and this is a part of their behavioural aims. Autonomy reflects in the “experience of integrity, volition, and vitality” and these experiences comes accompanied by the actions of self-regulation (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 254). In other words, a person feels like they have control over their lives when they have their sets of strong principles, free will and only then will obtain enthusiasm in living their lives.

As Deci and Ryan’s SDT focuses heavily relies on intrinsic motivation which is a self-determined and internalized motivation that satisfies a person’s three basic needs which leads to “personal growth, vitality, and well-being” (Krause et al., 2019, p. 2). The theory states that when the three psychological needs of SDT which are competence, relatedness, and autonomy are satisfied with autonomous motivation, it allows natural growth and changes in a person’s life. The usage of SDT for this research will be able to aid in analysing the effects of the ‘Love Myself’ campaign by viewing whether the campaign is able to satisfy the three needs of ARMY with autonomous motivation that allows the fans to live out the messages of the campaign.

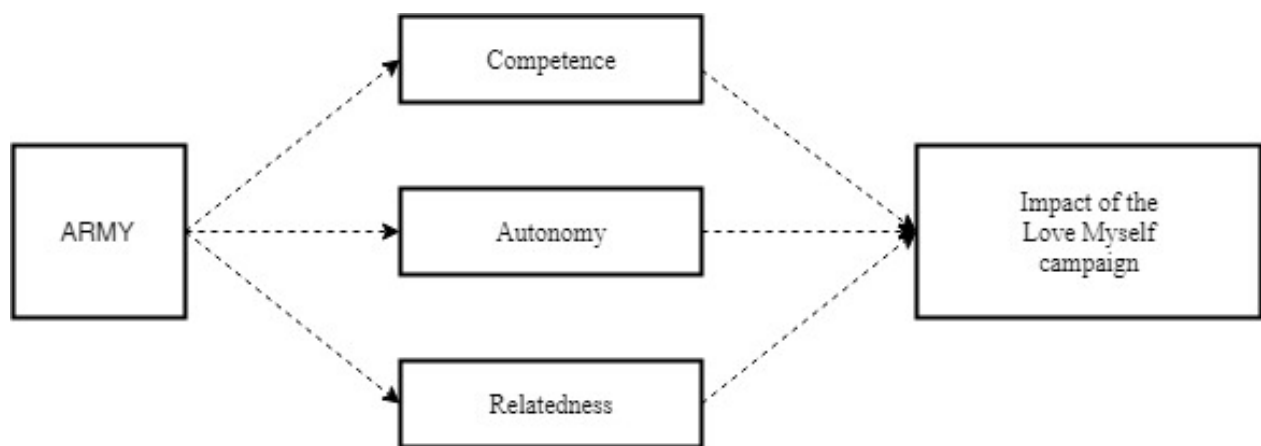
2.3 Conceptual Framework

A study done by Hickey (2018) used SDT to compose and analyse the theoretical lens and to categorize the data accordingly. This long-term qualitative study researched on the outcome of a five-year music program in a juvenile detention faculty by using SDT with the Good Lives Model to categorize and measure growth and changes referred to as ‘positive youth development’. Using Hickey’s study as inspiration to use the three constructs of SDT as the main category to draw up the framework of this study, the self-determination theory used in

this research aids to shape the direction of the study. The research objectives and questions are drawn up and linked to the three needs of SDT to measure the impact of the ‘Love Myself’ campaign in the lives of ARMY and to analyse if there is a need for the fans to implement the campaign’s message into their own lives.

Figure 1

Conceptual framework of the impact of the ‘Love Myself’ campaign



Note. Framework drawn up by the researcher to illustrate the impact of the ‘Love Myself’ campaign.

Figure 1 was constructed to show an idea on how the theory of SDT is used to measure the perspective of the lives of ARMY by measuring their competence, relatedness, and autonomy. As the concept of SDT focuses on goal-oriented behaviours, the perceived impact of the ‘Love Myself’ campaign can be accurately analysed if the participants are able to touch on the need of competence, relatedness, and autonomy. If one of the psychological needs is not positively aligned, it is safe to say that the ‘Love Myself’ campaign was not able to have an impact in a participant’s life as it was not able to motivate them for a complete change. It is simple to understand how the theory works as it is crucial for a person to see a change in their three psychological needs in any given situation.

ARMY are analysed in the perspective of their motivation and personality by directly viewing their opinions in the view of the three basic psychological needs. Several interview questions are drawn up covering the basic needs. It is straightforward on how the questions are constructed as it is clear to see whether the participant was able to feel the change of the basic needs. It is clear to the point that these questions could be asked and answered as 'Yes' or 'No' if simplified. The three research questions and objectives may not precisely mention on the three constructs of SDT, but it delves on the topic which is able to give insight on how the 'Love Myself' campaign is seen in the eyes of the participants.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Research Paradigm

To investigate the problem statement which highlights on the lack of audience-focused research, the ideal method of research is to focus on the perspective which allows the voices to be heard. In this case, this research dives into the qualitative research where words are emphasized rather than the quantity of the data collected and analysed (Bryman, 2012). To target the research objectives and answer the research questions, the research design is drawn up by adapting a conceptual framework by using Ryan and Deci's (2000) Self-Determination Theory (SDT). The strategy of the research is to analyse the competence, relatedness, and autonomy of the fans of BTS called ARMY, which is the three basic psychological needs and core importance of SDT.

Instead of navigating the research to cater the interest of SDT, it will cater the interest of the research by using interviews as it is the best way to access "people's perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality" as it allows participants to individually have a session with the researcher to go into details of their view on the 'Love Myself' campaign (Punch, 2014, p. 144). The usage of the deductive approach to critically analyse this research aids in understanding ARMY and how they have navigated through their lives with the messages from the 'Love Myself' campaign. Understanding the problem statement allowed the researcher to draw up the framework useful in the collection of data by using SDT and its constructs as the themes (Azungah, 2018).

It may be theoretically relevant to use quantitative methods to link SDT's basic needs in the perspective of ARMY however, the focus is not on the basic needs itself but of the

variation and details of the said needs. Every participant may relate to all the basic needs for the ‘Love Myself’ campaign to have an impact but the explicit detail of what kind of competence, relatedness, and autonomy that ARMY experienced is what this research is aiming towards hence making interviews the preferred choice to gather information.

3.2 Location of the Study and Population

From the analysis of different kind of studies, there was a lack of research done within the perspective of Malaysia whilst there were no research conducted on any sort of celebrity-led campaigns. Therefore, conducting a study focusing on Malaysia will bring in new insights and revelations to the topic. The data collection of this study was conducted specifically within the region of the Klang Valley.

As at 2022, the total population of Malaysia was estimated to 30.3 million local citizens where 17.3 million are male and 15.6 million are female (DOSM, 2022). There are 22.5 million people who make up the population that are between the ages 15 to 64 years of age where 12 million are male and 10.5 million are female (DOSM, 2022). Although there is no concrete data on the number of the population of ARMY within the Malaysian nationality, Malaysia ranked 7th place in the world for the most tweets regarding K-pop (Alhamzah, 2022).

The target population of this research focuses on the Malaysian BTS fans who identify as a part of ARMY. As the population is usually a large target group where knowledge needs to be gained, it is impossible to study them directly (Punch, 2014). Therefore, a sample is selected from the specific population.

3.3 Purposive Sampling

Sampling in qualitative research is just as important as it is in quantitative research as it takes into account the “purpose or focus in mind” deliberately (Punch, 2014, p. 161). For the larger population to be represented, purposive sampling is the most suitable to gather participants to take part in the study. The purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method where the factors of narrowing the sample is observed and selected according to the researcher’s judgment about which participants will be the “most useful or representative” (Babbie, 2014, p. 200).

The participants were found using social media accounts such as Twitter and Instagram, where they have openly declared and displayed that they are fans of BTS. The participants taking part in the study must meet the expectations of the sampling frame where they must be a Malaysian young adult located in Klang Valley. They need be a part of ARMY with the knowledge of the ‘Love Myself’ campaign however, the duration of how long they have been an ARMY is unnecessary. They are also required to have participated in the ‘Love Myself’ campaign through the five ways previously mentioned which is to stop comparing themselves with other people, discover and develop something within themselves, to motivate themselves with words of encouragements, to start reading books or finding inspirations that help them to discover more about themselves and to participate and join in the campaign by sharing a post or using the hashtag #BTSLoveMyself (*5 Ways to Love Myself by BTS*, 2018).

3.4 Research Instrument

The research instrument is used as a tool to aid in the collection of data (Prior, 2018). The research instrument was drawn up using Ryan and Deci’s (2000) SDT where a goal-oriented behaviour can be achieved when three psychological needs are satisfied. Hickey’s

(2018) research, which was used to draw up the conceptual framework for this research, was used as inspiration to structure the research instrument from Hickey's analysis and coding categories. From the details of Hickey's coding categories of the constructs of SDT, the questions for the interviews were formulated according to the three needs which links to the three research questions and research objectives accordingly. The first research question was formulated focusing on competence; the second research question on relatedness; followed by the third research question on autonomy. The three basic needs were reviewed and studied before any interview took place so that the interviewer can keep track with the flow of the interview and ask additional question when deemed necessary.

The interview was held in-person in Malaysia through a one-to-one interview so that the respondents would adjust better and express their answers freely. The interview consists of five parts where the participants were asked start-up questions to get comfortable and adapted to the style of the interviewer before the formal questions were asked. As the next three parts focuses directly on the three needs of SDT, these questions heavily relied on the participants' lifestyles which brought a prism of answers to target the research questions and objectives.

Competence focuses on how the motivation of a person allows them to adapt into new obstacles in changing situations where this motivation needs to be self-sustaining as forced adaptation does not count as competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000). As the first research question asks: *'How does ARMY perceive BTS' 'Love Myself' in their lives after participation?'*, the interview questions were formulated accordingly so that it could gather the relevant and necessary information needed to analyse competence.

The key importance of relatedness strives on feeling connected and to belong in a society. The interview questions were structured to address the perspective of the individual followed by them being a part of the fandom. As the interviewees are able to voice opinions

on both side of the spectrum, it addresses the second research question which asks: *'What are the benefits and/or the risks and challenges faced by the individual being a part of ARMY after participating in the campaign?'*

Autonomy is basically the need to produce self-regulated actions in a person's life. A person is said to have a strong desire to have control over their lives. This need can be analysed by noticing a person's behaviour as SDT believes that forced behaviours does not last. The third research question asks: *'How does the campaign change the mindset of ARMY towards loving themselves after participation?'* and the interview questions were drawn up to address pattern and change in the interviewee's behaviours and their view to control in their lives.

The last part of the interview catered to the closing questions where the interviewees are given time and space to add any other opinions that they could not mention during the interview hence, they were given the opportunity to express before the interview concludes. The full interview questions are added in Appendix B for reference.

Before any interview took place, the research interview questions was checked and validated by the supervisors with additional approval from the department of UTAR Scientific and Ethical Review Committee. For further validity, a pilot test was conducted to ensure that the interview questions were able to target the research questions and objectives.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

Before the any data collection took place, a preliminary analysis was done during the beginning phrase of the research. This preliminary analysis was done to view the various messages and stories shared by the fans of BTS from the usage hashtag of the campaign: #BTSLoveMyself, to analyse the general impact of the 'Love Myself' campaign seen through social media. The preliminary analysis of over one hundred posts on Twitter, BTS fans shared

their messages with other fans, by showing their personal experiences, how they overcame problems of being bullied and facing rejection, how they were empowered and are now able to love themselves. Specific terms like ‘bullying’, ‘depression’, ‘dream’, ‘sexual’ and so on were used to narrow down the search analysis and all the terms had stories shared by the fans. In terms of specification, if ARMY is able to accept the message to love themselves and to come to terms with their past experiences from violence and being bullied or any other negative experiences, the ‘Love Myself’ campaign will be able to make an impact to the former victims, to stop existing abusive behaviours, and to prevent future violence as well as being able to have the courage to love themselves and dream of their tomorrow.

The conceptual framework of this research is drawn up using Hickey’s (2018) long-term qualitative study which used SDT to analyse the development of youths through a five-year music program in a juvenile detention faculty. This study was used as a template and inspiration on the direction of the study. Hickey (2018, p. 4053) has a coded category descriptions from all analysis of his interviews. One of the main concepts he used is SDT which the three basic needs of SDT was used as the parent categories and this table aided in formulating the interview questions which required specific direction according to the specific need of SDT.

A pilot test was conducted two months prior the official interviews took place. One person was a part of the pilot test to test run the interview questions and the flow of the interview to which concluded to be useful and was unnecessary of any necessary changes henceforth, the results of the participant who took part in the pilot test was included with the official interviews.

3.6 Ethical Consideration

There are ethical considerations that will be taken into reflection so that there will be no harm brought to the participants, there is no lack of informed consent, there is no invasion of privacy and there is no deception involved (Bryman, 2012, p. 135). For this research, the identity and the privacy of the participants, who took part in the interview, are kept confidential and correctly quoted. Punch (2003, p. 35) highlighted that it is the right for all participants to know “what will happen to the information they provide”.

The study was completely voluntary, and the participants will be thoroughly informed throughout the interview. There was no invasion of privacy in this study as there are no information that could be used to track the data back to the participants as the interviews are number coded and the interviewees are referred to as a nickname chosen by the interviewees themselves. Before any interviews, the participants were informed then asked to sign an informed consent form which clearly instructed the participants on how the study worked and on the confidentiality of the study as well as to sign the Personal Data Protection Notice (PDP) statement from UTAR. There was no deception used in this study that could cause unethical practices. All interviewees were given the right to withdraw from the research even after the interview took place. All of the interviews took in between of 20 minutes to 1 hour and 20 minutes. The consent form and the PDP statement is in the appendix for reference. The researcher received approval to conduct the interviews from the UTAR Institute of Postgraduate Studies and Research.

3.7 Data Collection

Table 1 displays the demographics of the participants who have taken part in the interview. A total of 11 participants took part in the interview where there were 1 male and 10 females. In terms of ethnicity, there were 7 Malays, 2 Chinese and 2 Indians who participated in the interview. As it is a requirement for participants to be a fan of BTS and to have heard as well as participated in the 'Love Myself' campaign, these categories were the first few questions asked during the start-up questions of the interview. To give a more personalized identity to the participants, they were asked to choose a nickname of their choice after the interviews were conducted.

Table 1*Demographic Information of the Interviewees*

Pseudo-name	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Encounter BTS	Became an ARMY	Campaign Participation Medium
Bang Army	23	Female	Chinese	Since debut (2013)	March 2016	Use hashtag
Namjoon	20	Male	Malay	2013	2015	Use hashtag
No Jams	20	Female	Malay	2013	2015	Use hashtag, Join small events
Yeon Tan	21	Female	Chinese	2014	April 2015	Use hashtag
Moonchild	26	Female	Malay	End of 2017	End of 2017	Use hashtag, Share story
Euphoria	21	Female	Indian	2015	2017	Use hashtag
Singularity	19	Female	Malay	April 2019	April 2019	Use hashtag
Young Forever	30	Female	Malay	April 2019	April 2019	Retweet
Chimmy	25	Female	Malay	Since debut (2013)	2017	Use hashtag
Peach	24	Female	Malay	Since debut (2013)	2013	Use hashtag
Agust D	20	Female	Indian	2014	2014	Use hashtag

Note. Data collected by the researcher in 2019.

To ensure that the right sample size was used to gather the participants purposive sampling method had to be used. Although it is a non-probability sampling method, the only

reason it had to be a purposive sampling was due to the location. A notice was used to gather participants using Twitter through BTS fan accounts in Malaysia. The notice stated that a student researcher was looking for ARMYs who were interested in taking part of the research she was conducting. It relied on voluntary participation as a link was attached to the notice that the fans who were interested in the research had to fill up and register for the interview. Out of the total of 14 fans, 3 fans could not participate in the interview because they were not living in Klang Valley and it would be difficult to conduct a face-to-face interview. Even though online interview was available, the rest of the interviews were one-to-one in-person therefore would have caused differences as online and in-person interviews have different characteristics which could have led to possible bias in terms of data collection. As the data collection took place over a period of months, interviews were conducted once participants registered for the interview. The researcher conducted the interviews according to the participant requirements and specific gender, race, and other factors was not involved in the selection of participants. It was on a first come, first serve basis for participants that were living in Klang Valley.

The respondents met the requirements necessary to take part in the interview where they: must be a Malaysian young adult located in Klang Valley, must be an engaged fan of BTS with the knowledge of the 'Love Myself' campaign, and must have taken part in the 'Love Myself' campaign. The interviews were held face-to-face in-person according to the respondents' preferred time and venue. Initially, the 'Love Myself' campaign was scheduled to end on the 1st of November, 2019 after a two-year campaign which initially started on 2017. The researcher collected all the data before the campaign ended to avoid potential disturbances to the data which could have been regarding the end of the campaign. However, the campaign decided to continue the collaboration with UNICEF until further notice.

For the entire study, only 11 participants were interviewed. For each of the interviews conducted, the topics were kept in track and analysed using thematic analysis according to the

flow of the research. By the time the researcher interviewed the 11th respondent, the data reached saturation as there was no new information that could be collected for the research. The interview link was still available and open to register. After the 11th interview and reaching saturation, the researcher closed the interview link and found that there were no other participants registered for the interview which smoothly transitioned to the end of data collection. In a qualitative study, especially in a homogenous study population, it is estimated that 9 to 17 interviews can reach saturation (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022) which supports that decision of the researcher to discontinue the data collection process. The interviews were halted at reaching saturation level where no new information can be attained. According to Marshall (1996, p. 523), “an appropriate sample size for a qualitative study is one that adequately answers the research question”. Therefore, after filtering the participants to reach common ground, the sample size of the study concludes to be appropriate as long as the participants are able to answer the research questions.

3.8 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) was used to identify, organise, and offer “insight to the patterns of meaning across a data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 57). As it is a flexible method, TA aids the researcher to keep track of certain topics and the research questions by giving meanings to the patterns identified in the data set. The data is then analyzed using concepts or themes that aids in the coding and interpreting of data.

After all interviews were conducted, the participants’ responses were manually transcribed using Microsoft Office Word. The entire transcription was first transcribed fully by the researcher then checked again by a transcriber to prevent bias and to double-check for mistakes and pronunciation errors. The transcriber attended the entire interviews which aids in

the understanding of the concept of the research and the context of the interview. Following up the transcriptions, the researcher organized the data using a deductive approach which is a top-down approach amongst other thematic analysis approaches. It is where “the researcher brings to the data a series of concepts, ideas, or topics that they use to code and interpret the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 58). The concepts and the topics were constructed and arranged according to the research questions and research objectives while tying it to the constructs of the SDT as they were used to form the interview questions. The responses of the participants were analysed and coded according to the main three constructs of SDT which are: competence, relatedness, and autonomy. All the respondents were given pseudo-names for privacy and these pseudo-names were chosen individually by the respondents.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Competence

Competence focuses on how the motivation of a person aids him or her to adapt to new obstacles in new environments where this motivation needs to be self-sustaining as forced adaptation does not count as competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Adapting to new environments naturally create new changes or new adaptation behaviours where the individual would have gained attainment of skills and knowledge. Competence emphasizes on having goals or accomplishments which links back to the definition of ‘the need to seek learning’ in order to achieve mastery and completion. The self-regulating behaviours motivate the person to the point where they desire to improve and better themselves that results with new capabilities.

One of the ways that the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) proves effective is when there are self-regulating behaviours added with personality developments (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The first research objective is to examine how ARMY perceives BTS’ ‘Love Myself’ campaign in their lives after participating in the campaign with the research question: how does ARMY perceive BTS’ ‘Love Myself’ campaign in their lives after participation? With the ‘Love Myself’ campaign being the new environment, participants displayed different forms of categories to display their engagement and satisfaction that they experienced.

4.1.1 Skills

This sub-theme is created to highlight the various skills that the participants had gained as stated above where the individual would have gained attainment of **skills** and knowledge

whilst adapting into a new environment. Attainment of skills mainly focuses on levelling up the individual where the participants had gained confidence through the ‘Love Myself’ campaign by accepting themselves instead of comparing their worth with others. Agust D shared the struggle she faced with self-confidence where it caused her to compare her looks and intelligence with people around her.

“I used to not like myself. [I used to think like] “Oh my gosh, you’re so much prettier, you’re so much smarter.” ... But then, ... I kind [of] started [to change my thoughts to] “Why not? I’m pretty too. I’m smart too.” [T]he self-confidence built throughout the years.”

(Agust D)

“I d[id] care about how ... people [saw] me ... but then after [I participated in this campaign], ... I have more confidence to be myself. Maybe I can just say that: This is me. Who cares if you like or not?”

(Bang Army)

Moonchild, Agust D and No Jams explained how the campaign allowed them to develop the skill to focus and prioritize on themselves first then only achieve the goal of the ‘Love Myself’ campaign to potentially love others in the process. Moonchild learnt to develop positive thinking skills instead of being hard on herself for not meeting her own standards.

“I became a bit more positive. I didn’t really beat myself down too much for looking a certain way or [from] a certain thing I have done [from] a long time ago. I’ve now changed [my perception and accepted that] those things were supposed to happen to make me [who I am] today. I wasn’t really facing any internal problems myself [but] I was just a little hard on myself last time but now, I have become more appreciative of the little things that I have achieved now.”

(Moonchild)

For Agust D, she learnt to prioritize herself first before catering to other people and their feelings. She had a habit of not catering to what she wanted even though that would be her new year resolution for years.

“...through this campaign, I want to put myself before others first instead of always thinking about what others want. [Bec]ause I have that habit of [thinking] “What I think doesn’t matter as much as what other people think.”

[T]hroughout the years, ... my new year goal has been to put myself first, to say yes to what I want instead of what other people want first. Prioritize myself in a way."

(Agust D)

For No Jams, she realized that she has the right to like certain things even if the people around her would judge her and look down on her. She learnt to love herself by accepting that there are things that she can do without having to listen to other people's negative remarks.

"...back in my high school, people ... condemn me about liking K-pop stuff, BTS. It's reducing lately. [It is n]ot as much as what I received back then in high school. [A]fter the campaign, [I] don't care about what people say. I do what I want to do. I like [what I am doing] and it makes me happy. Why would I listen to all those negative messages [and] things around me?"

(No Jams)

Another skill that was produced in competence is displayed through appearance. The 'Love Myself' campaign advocates for their participants to love themselves in whichever circumstances they are in. Chimmy, Bang Army, and No Jams stated that improving and changing their physical appearance through applying makeup and improving their clothing was one of the ways that allowed them to love themselves more.

"...before this, I didn't have confidence in myself. So now, I [put more effort] to make myself prettier. Before, [I wore spectacles and] ... I [did] not wear makeup so I change[d] my appearance. I want to be pretty and I want people to notice me. Before [the campaign], I'm hiding behind my shadow. That's very freaky, right?"

(Chimmy)

"But after [I participate in the campaign], I started to learn because if you want to be[come] a better you, I think your appearance is very important. [Y]our soul is ... much more important than your appearance but, ... the world [is] quite realistic so people do see how others look."

(Bang Army)

"...people say that Muslims need to ... cover all parts of your body. And I was ... kind of scared if people saw me [with my sleeve folded up]. Since the campaign, ... I should wear what I want to wear. [W]hy should I bother people talk about me, right?"

(No Jams)

Two participants stated how the ‘Love Myself’ campaign aided the skill to accept their identities that they had difficulties adjusting to. Euphoria shared her experience of growing up as a mixed race and shared the difficulty on getting along with two different races as she did not belong within the race entirely. Being a Malaysia with a multiracial identity has been difficult since the formation of the country with the classification system (Reddy & Selvanathan, 2020). As ‘mixed’ races had been struggling with being uncategorized within the official classification system, mixed people like Euphoria’s life highlights the barrier she felt from being unable to belong to a specific category. Euphoria shared that from participating in the ‘Love Myself’ campaign allowed her to accept the reality of life and embrace their uniqueness of their identity.

“They would ... abandon me. They’ll ... speak in [a language and even though] I understand what they are talking about, I [can’t] communicate well because there’s ... a barrier there. [G]rowing up as a mixed kid is really hard. [O]ne of the things that I’m trying to aim is to accept who I am, accept my flaw and make that flaw into ... a blessing or something that makes you unique, that makes you yourself.”

“The benefit is that you’ll learn to accept the reality. I [have] always been different, and I always try to fit in to feel like I [belong]. You’re born to be outstanding; you’re born supposed to be different. [The campaign] makes me think, learn, accept the reality and if people are talking bad about [me], it’s okay. There are other people who’s going to support you. Instead of looking [at] the negative part [on] people who’s go[ing to] pull you down, you just look at the people who’s go[ing to] support you.”

(Euphoria)

Namjoon is another case of accepting and embracing his identity through sexuality. Namjoon shared the dilemma he was placed in when embracing his identity with his own country.

“...in Malaysia, the homosexual community is ... being discriminated [and since] I’m one of them, [the campaign] help me to think that I have to care about myself more. [B]y following this campaign, it helps me to love myself more [and] to not care [about] other people.”

“...gays in Malaysia is being discriminated so before this ‘Love Myself’ campaign, I did not dare tell anyone about my sexuality. [This campaign is] a huge impact for me. Like now, I’m more open to anyone. I would just admit ... that I’m gay.”

(Namjoon)

Namjoon knew the difficulty his life would be to embrace his sexuality however, the ‘Love Myself’ campaign brought clarity in Namjoon’s case to love himself as hiding and being fearful of his identity only made him feel more oppressed. Namjoon shared the profound strength that he gained from participating in the campaign which sparked a power to care for others who could possibly be in the same ‘oppressive’ feeling that she/he was in before.

“I tend to care more about myself. [B]y joining this campaign, [it] let me take a very good care of my inner self ... like to always be kind [to] others and to do good things because I don’t want people to feel like me, [to feel] oppressed [because I know how that feels like].”

“...before this, I would listen to others “Oh don’t be like this ... Be straight ... Don’t be gay.” I got that a lot. But after I join[ed] in this campaign, I feel like “Oh why should I listen to others? I could just be whatever I want. Like you have no right [over me].”

(Namjoon)

4.1.2 Self-Regulating Behaviours

The next sub-theme under competence is focused on **self-regulating behaviours** as stated in the definition of competence. These behaviours are gained by the individual to adapt into the new environment better. Participants shared how these self-regulating behaviours allows them to focus on improving themselves as well as to reflect on themselves. For instance, Yeontan learnt to broaden her perspective towards people rather than jumping into conclusion. She elaborated how the ‘Love Myself’ campaign allowed her to view that people could have a backstory of pain and trauma that they could have gone through which made Yeontan realize that she could unknowingly judge people instead.

“...before the campaign, ... I tend to look at things [only from] my point of view. [A]fter the campaign started, and I started to learn more about it, I start to think and view things in another perspective. I started to understand that everyone has a behind story ... that they don't tell other people that easily. I'll take more aspects ... into consideration ... before I come to a decision or make a judgement.”

(Yeontan)

Yeontan shared further on how developing sound judgement allowed her to realize that she had more control towards her emotions on her perception towards life. This allowed her to experience and produce empathy that the ‘Love Myself’ campaign.

“I feel that I can have more control over my life from the way [that] I think and the way I act. Because I've read somewhere that ... the way you view things and the way you react upon things determines how, for example, how your day is going to go. [Because of] this, I view things in a more positive way, and I also look at things more openly [which] means [that] I don't only look from my point of view but I try to [look] at other people's point of view too.”

“I learnt to show some empathy to other people also. Because after all, we don't know what they're going through behind everything.”

(Yeontan)

These self-regulating behaviours boosts an individual's personality developments as individuals incur these behaviours to develop their lives to adjust and sustain better. Agust D and Singularity expressed how they developed skills to attain control over their behaviours through emotions, such as anger.

“I used to get angry really, really fast last time. Like the littlest thing can tick me off [and] I would be super mad. And I think growing up and then [hearing and relating to BTS' songs], reading those lyrics, singing the songs, I [thought], “Maybe I need to change myself too”. [So] I'm growing up now [and] I'm get[ting] less angry. I'm actually very chill. Haven't gotten angry in a really long time for now. Even my sister [said], “You've actually changed a lot”.”

(Agust D)

“...the benefits are it's really good for the teenagers like me to control your emotion. From the campaign, you [learn to] control your emotion because if you know about BTS [and when] you listen to their songs, their songs really

help you a lot because the [lyrics they] wrote ... is to love yourself, to be better.”

(Singularity)

4.1.3 Seek Learning

The third sub-theme of competence is the need to **seek learning**. Deci and Ryan (2000, p. 252) emphasizes how competence will engage the individual to optimal challenges to “experience mastery or effectance in the physical and social worlds”. It is seen that competence works in full effect when individuals are stimulated and challenged to become a better version of themselves as the end goal. To achieve ‘mastery’, there is a need for seeking continuous learning as well as to develop goals and accomplishments to keep them engaged. Young Forever shared the importance on developing awareness on mental health challenged her to value and view things she did not notice before.

“...a lot of people are starting to talk about mental health, and I think this ‘Love Myself’ campaign came in at the right time [be]cause this ‘Love Myself’ campaign is talking about [how] you should love yourself and ... that helps you ... improve your mental health. I wouldn’t say [that] before this I had a bad mental health ... but I would say what I’ve noticed is that I’ve been more aware in those kind of things on how you should love yourself. [T]he timing of people talking about mental health and the ‘Love Myself’ campaign just fits nicely. [P]reviously, ... I was in my own world. I knew of [people suffering from mental health] but I didn’t really care ... [but] now I feel more aware.”

(Young Forever)

Young Forever and No Jams found themselves stimulated through the ‘Love Myself’ campaign to continue to improve the quality of their lifestyle and to accomplish previous goals that they could not accomplish before. They were both challenged to continue to learn and improve their Korean language skills.

“...the most significant change [is that] I’m aware about mental health and then it triggered a new interest in learning Korean. I can read the [Korean] characters but I’ve never actually done anything about it. Sometimes [when] I am looking at [song] lyrics, ... I don’t read the [Korean characters written

in English form], I read the Hangul (Korean language) lyrics so that's easier for you to catch what they are saying."

(Young Forever)

"I was really messy [but] now I'm more ... detail-oriented kind of person. I do proper notes [for classes] ... I became punctual, a very punctual person."

"[It] motivates me [to learn] something new ... from other Korean idols also [not just from BTS]. I kind [of] like [the] Korean language. So from that, I learn the alphabets a bit. Bit by bit."

(No Jams)

Based on the data above, through the 'Love Myself' campaign, participants were able to attain various competence such as skills through self-confidence, self-prioritizing, self-worth; self-regulating behaviours that produces personality developments; and continuous need to seek learning to achieve mastery and completion to love themselves more and better than they did previously. All these abilities display the importance of competence and how it motivated the participants to naturally adapt into the influence of the 'Love Myself' campaign as well as answering the first research question to examine how ARMY perceive BTS' 'Love Myself' campaign in their lives after participating in the campaign.

4.2 Relatedness

Deci and Ryan (2000) explains a group of people connecting through relatedness to be a group that focuses on connecting and caring for each other through the adoption of the group's needs and values which then leads to the coordination of the group. Relatedness underlines the importance of being part of a society to connect with others as well as to compete themselves to adjust into the social entity better. With the 'Love Myself' campaign being the focus, whoever joins the campaign will become a part of the 'society' for this situation. Participants expressed their opinions on how they viewed themselves within this 'society' and how they felt connected to others, cared for them, and even being cared by others so that they can have

a sense of belonging and security. The second research objective was to investigate the benefits and/or the risks and challenges faced by the individual being a part of ARMY after participating in the campaign with the research question: what are the benefits and/or the risks and challenges faced by the individual being a part ARMY after participating in the campaign?

As the second research question focuses on the benefits and/or the risks and challenges, the interview questions were asked accordingly. The phrase ‘and/or’ was used and elaborated as not all the participants would agree that there are both benefits and risks to the campaign and not all the participants would agree that there are only benefits or only risks. This phrase was emphasized to all of the interviewees so that they are able to express their opinions freely without having the interview questions led to biased answers.

Relatedness helps a person to organise oneself into the society to connect and function as a part of the group. In any form of a group setting, there are bound to be benefits and challenges faced by the individual who is a part of it. What were the views of the participants after participating in the ‘Love Myself’ campaign? As a member of ARMY, the participants shared how they felt connected to other ARMYs and even represented the group on the benefits gained or challenges faced.

One of the impacts that the campaign had on the ARMYs were the unity that formed within the social circle. Yeontan and Peach elaborated on how the fans got together despite previous differences and focused on the common goal they shared which was ultimately to aid their idol and idol’s interests.

“...last time, ... the fandom [was] not really united. [F]or example, I[n]ternational]-ARMYs, K[orean]-ARMYs. [T]hey separate themselves but once this campaign came out and people share their stories, ... they start[ed] to understand each other [and] they start to get together better. [B]eing united can make us achieve a lot of things.”

(Yeontan)

“...we’re all in this together because ... we’re doing something because you would see things [where] you have to vote for [end of the year] awards but

this for a real cause. We're not just fans for the sake of fans. We're doing something to help out the artist for the cause they are going for. [E]ven though I'm not in touch with a lot of fans in the same fandom but the few ones that I know would really go for it. I'm not that type to really focus on this kind of stuff because I have other things to think about but it's really nice to see that like it's successful at least to [the people who are contributing to the campaign]."

(Peach)

Participants displayed a high sense of belonging and related with other ARMYs especially from reading their life stories and the voices that had been shared using the hashtag #BTSLoveMyself through the 'Love Myself' campaign. Singularity was prompted to comfort the ARMYs who shared their sad stories whilst Agust D was able to witness her friends who were fans gain help through the campaign.

"Sometimes I feel sad because [ARMYs] have different stories and when they [write on Twitter] about their lives or something that they think that are not good on them, I feel so sad [for] them and I try to comfort them by [telling them to], "Just go listen to BTS songs and you will feel better." I just try comfort them."

(Singularity)

"I have friends that are also [ARMYs] and because they've been struggling with ... lack of confidence, [through] this campaign, they started to speak out more. They stated more of their opinions, and they weren't afraid to say what's right and what's wrong."

(Agust D)

One of the reasons that the 'Love Myself' campaign was able to achieve a large usage of the hashtag #BTSLoveMyself is displayed through Yeontan as she was able to relate to one of the stories that was shared through the hashtag as she was able to connect with a fan's story to her own life.

“[The fan] was cutting herself and having suicidal thoughts also. [S]he was from a broken family or something like that. [T]his campaign came in and she learn to accept things as they were and look in another perspective to find a meaning. The storyline is somewhat like that. I can relate to the story too although I haven’t experienced any suicidal thoughts or self-harm thoughts [but] my parents [are] divorced. [A]t one point, I can relate to her in some way.”

(Yeontan)

As much as there were benefits shared by the participants being a part of ARMY, one of the risks and challenges that they faced is viewed through the additional perspective of Yeontan. She had two juniors from her previous education institution who were ARMYs. She had a chance to meet and talk with them about the ‘Love Myself’ campaign however, Yeontan stated that the issue faced by these fans were the lack of understanding on the details of the campaign. Her juniors only supported the campaign because it was launched by BTS.

“...from what I have seen, the campaign inspires [ARMYs] but some don't quite get it. [T]hey can't relate to [the campaign]. I have two juniors [from] my previous institution. [T]hey support the campaign because it's BTS ... but when asked what they think about the [campaign, they know that it is about self-love but did not have] further understanding.”

(Yeontan)

Despite challenges that Yeontan encountered through her support and interest on the ‘Love Myself’ campaign, she shared in the interview how the campaign shaped her perspective which led to self-reflection that made her more aware and mindful on how her behaviour could affect others.

“I was [an extreme] extrovert and I tend to do things without really thinking that much. [S]o after the campaign began and I studied more, I start to think more about how the things I do will affect myself because it's love myself, and in other ways affect the surroundings like The Butterfly Effect [which] means [that] something small I do, it affects [others].”

(Yeontan)

Yeontan was not the only case that brought forth an action that benefited the social circle as relatedness is key on finding security in their attachments and feelings. In the case of

Peach, her experience through the ‘Love Myself’ campaign brought an urge to care and stand up for the ones who are being bullied as she was previously bullied. Peach shared the time when she stood up for her brother when he was getting bullied at school.

“Before this, I was bullied in high school. I was an athlete before. I had an injury and then when an athlete [gets] an injury and you cannot do sports anymore [and] you will gain weight very easily. My high school friends went “Oh, getting fat now.”

“Right now, I really want to help whoever that comes in my way that have [the] same experience as me. [M]y younger brother is having difficulty because he’s not [the] masculine type and [in our social circle], they have stereotype[s] and you have to follow that stereotype. But he likes to wear like girly things [because] he has [feminine influences from his family]. He like[s] to wear make-up and stuff but at school, he would get bullied for that. I did go up to the seniors [in the school] because they [were] my juniors. So now, they don’t have a say. They can’t even approach my [brother]”

(Peach)

Another layer within the relatedness circle of ARMYs, participants voiced how the campaign encouraged them to grow intimate and closer to their family and friends. As family and friends are important and links to the participants within their social circle, it is without a doubt that this would play a factor. Chimmy stated a simple and short approval concerning this with Agust D sharing a deeper insight on how her relationship used to be with her parents and siblings before the campaign.

“[I’m] closer to my family [and] friends. I’m closer than before [the campaign].”

(Chimmy)

“I [used to] fight with my parents a lot last time. I [didn’t] talk to my sister in general. We were at the point where [it was like] “I don’t talk to you; you don’t talk to me [be]cause I hate you that much’. [T]o my parents, ... [it was like] ‘I don’t want to go out in general with you’”. I felt like they were very against me.”

(Agust D)

Agust D felt that she was under a lot of pressure growing up because of her parents who were pastors in a church, and she had to make sure that she was perfect to match that status.

“Parents were pastors so in general, that was a lot of pressure. You go to church, you have to be perfect, you got to do this, you got to do that. I felt a lot of pressure and I think that’s what filled my hatred towards my parents more and towards myself because I felt like I wasn’t perfect enough for them. [B]ut slowly, I [started to think like], “I can do this. I’m not that perfect but I’m trying my best.”

(Agust D)

Participants also shared the challenges that they faced with their family as not all circumstances can deny the challenges of maintaining a relationship with people, especially people as close as a parent. Peach and Euphoria expressed that the main challenge that they found in their relationship and conversations that they had with their parents was the generation differences. Peach emphasized how she is doing her best on helping her sibling because she knows what it feels like to be suppressed and regretful from not pursuing her talents.

“It’s very hard ... you don’t get your ... older generation’s support. [M]ental health is important but then the older generation is [saying things like] “[Y]ou, younger generation keep dwelling on these things, you don’t focus on the real thing in the world like people are dying.” [A]s a start, I’m trying to help my [younger sibling] by changing my parents’ perspective because they would do the same thing, they would hinder [my sibling] from doing things.”

(Peach)

“...most of the time, [I] hate myself and beat myself up. [I]t seems hopeless but ... people started sharing little by little, it makes me want to open up too. [S]ometimes I feel like I’m going through it alone. If I tell to like my parent, they wouldn’t understand.”

(Euphoria)

Euphoria agreed that the campaign allowed her to see that her story mattered as well and that she was not alone despite her circumstance. The connection that the participants had with other fans strengthens the belongingness that they felt within the group and even if rejection comes from people who are close to them, they are reminded that there is a group called ARMY that they can conform to. Namjoon shared how people around him did not share

the same interests as him which led to him finding people with same interests that he can connect with over time.

“If [I] talk about K-pop [with] people [around me, they] would [respond], “Oh, you like K-pop? Eww (expressing disgust),” or something like that. [But when I started to like BTS], I started to realise that people are more open with [and they will] be like “Oh, you like BTS? I like BTS too.” It allows me to connect with others.”

(Namjoon)

One of the participants shared a deeper insight on her experience in the theme of relatedness is No Jams. Her case starts with her reflecting her own life and behaviours that was causing issues within the realm of her social circle and how participating in the ‘Love Myself’ campaign opened her perspective.

“...back then, I always like want[ed] to win. [When my friends and I are] discussing about something, I’m the one who always be right. I’m never wrong. [A]fter this campaign, I started to listen to my friends. I wanted to listen to their opinions about things ... [and] I want to value our friendship over my selfishness.”

(No Jams)

Just like Namjoon, No Jams experienced her circle of friends not sharing her interests and displaying their disgust towards her liking BTS.

“I cannot talk about [the campaign] with [my friends] because they [would respond] “Oh, BTS eww (expressing disgust)” like that.”

(No Jams)

This challenge that No Jams experienced only aided her in finding a preferred social circle of people who allow self-expression and who will not judge. This circle of friends were mutuals who are people that follow each other on a social media platform called Twitter. These mutuals are from all around the world that No Jams can connect with, and they accept each other.

“...back then, I was really shy ... but then, after this campaign, I ... interact with people [on] Twitter. I have this one other account that I just interact with my mutuals and they’re from all around the world and they’re okay [and] they don’t actually care where you [are] from [and] ... they have different religion[s] [but they are] accepting you in any ways.”

(No Jams)

Relatedness initiates behaviours and attachments that a group of people can relate and fit in to “experience feelings of security, belongingness, and intimacy with others” (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 252). In any new situation, it is difficult to adapt and relate as quickly as a person would like to. It is not odd for a group of people to have clashes within themselves. However, a glimpse of what was mentioned by the participants can bring light to the issue faced and additionally, it brings clarity on the benefits gained from being a part of ARMY as well as to answer the research question on what the benefits are and/or the risks and challenges faced by the individual being a part of ARMY after participating in the campaign.

4.3 Autonomy

Autonomy highlights the importance of an individual’s strong need to self-regulate their life and aim to develop ownership of one’s behaviors. As the ‘Love Myself’ campaign aims to bring in values of loving oneself as well as to end violence, the third research objective analyses how the campaign changes the mindset of ARMY towards loving themselves after participation with the research question: how does the campaign change the mindset of ARMY towards loving themselves after participation? To link the research objective and question to the construct of autonomy, the interview questions were asked regarding the mindset of the interviewees as achieving autonomy where it should produce independent actions amongst them.

To emphasize the difference between competence and autonomy, competence focuses on the attainment of skills and knowledge in the new environment whereas autonomy leans

more on the new actions that are produced by the individual. Autonomy states that a person have more control over their lives when they display a strong set of principles, free will, and enthusiasm in living their lives. It is important that all the individual's behaviours avoid heteronomous control as there is a need of self-organization in the person's actions and behaviours (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Although competence and autonomy produce different outcomes, analysis had shown how they link together hand in hand to produce further changes in behaviours in individuals. In earlier section, participants mentioned how the 'Love Myself' campaign had shifted their mindset to produce confidence (competence) which then produce confidence-built actions (autonomy). Bang Army and Chimmy shared their experiences on how the campaign encouraged them to come out of their comfort zone to try things that they would not before. Bang Army shared that she speaks louder because she was soft spoken before. Bang Army struggled to elaborate through words on her newly gained confidence-built actions during the interview which is summarized here on how she gained confidence to raise her hand faster in class and to now walk with confidence because she used to slouch while walking due to low self-esteem.

"I was told by others that I speak very soft[ly]. [Even though I] thought that I was already very loud, [my friends ask me to repeat]. After [the campaign], yeah [I] speak louder."

(Bang Army)

"...before this, I'm afraid to participate in any event. But because of BTS and my passion toward them, I start to go to their event[s] and [another K-pop group's] birthday event. I build my own confidence. [M]y working life help me to build my own confidence and be more tough."

(Chimmy)

Chimmy expressed how her passion for BTS, and the campaign boosted profound confidence to act in her life by participating in physical events even though she was afraid to

previously. This profound confidence can also be seen through Singularity's life where the workings of competence and autonomy can be seen at play.

"Before this, I had a bad past. I had friends that always bully me...mental[ly]. [A]fter this campaign, I [realized that] I don't need friend[s] like them because they really don't help me to find myself and they really don't help me to [become] better."

"...before this, I never [knew] who I am, and I feel like I cannot live. I feel so depressed because of my friends, because of my school. [I]f you are friend[s] with someone, you must support them no matter what. My friends always judge[d] me and never support[ed] me. [T]hat's not the best thing that you can do [to] your best friend. [A]fter this campaign, you don't need to worry about what others [will] say about you. You just go and then let it go. [B]e who you want to be and you actually can live without your [toxic] friends."

(Singularity)

Through the 'Love Myself' campaign, Singularity realized that her friends were not supporting her but was causing depression instead. The campaign teaches the individual to search for their identity and worth so that they can love themselves. Singularity learnt through the campaign that she can be herself without having toxic friends in her life. Singularity also expressed how she was nervous to come for the interview as well but decided to go for it because of what she learnt from the campaign.

"Before the campaign, I have a low-confiden[ce]. It's like I like to do [something] but ... I'm scared [of] what people will say about me. [A]fter the campaign, BTS [said to] love yourself and be yourself. I [thought to myself] "Why must I be scared about what other people say?" and then I just do those things after that.

Before this, I [was] really scared to meet people and scared to try to make friends because I think that I'm not good at [meeting new] people. I try to be confident and try to meet you because I think that's what BTS told us to do."

(Singularity)

Autonomy emphasizes how it is essential for all decisions to be made where the person must feel the need to choose to act rather than to be forcefully driven to make an action. Yeontan shared how taking responsibility allowed her to be confident in the decision she made

which then results in less regrets. Agust D brings in the perspective of what it was like to not be in control of her life. She expressed that the ‘Love Myself’ campaign motivated her to the point where she started to plan for her future instead of having no idea on what to do with her life.

“By learning to take responsibility, I’ve learnt that you wouldn’t regret it that much after. [T]he other choices [that I had to choose from] might be good too but at least I’m happy with [the] choice [that I made] because I know that I make this happen. I learn[t] that I can take more control of my life and also [that] everyone’s feel[ings] are equally important. [W]hen I take other people’s views into consideration way too much, I tend to neglect my own views.”

(Yeontan)

“Before [the campaign], definitely [I] was not in control. I didn’t even know what I wanted to do. I’m just laze around and do nothing. [B]ut after this campaign, I have started to be more decisive in a way. I’ve come to know what I want to do in life in general and know what I want in ... ten years from now. I don’t share the things I want but I’m slowly planning it and I think it’s a really good thing [be]cause I’m putting myself first [when I’m making the plans].”

(Agust D)

Achieving autonomy is not as easy as it sounds, and it does not naturally cause a change overnight. Euphoria stated the difficulty on achieving a ‘better life’ but also mentioned how small progress slowly builds up to a lifestyle. She shared that it is not necessary to show a big change in life as it is not instant for everyone, however, the smallest of action is able to show love and kindness to people and even potentially become a support to them.

“...sometime[s] you feel like you have control in your life but at certain points [especially] when you are at your super lowest moment, you feel like you lost everything, you have nothing. But when you know about this campaign, ... it’s a process. It’s not a one-night change. [O]ne thing that I’ve practiced is that when I already know my true self-worth, instead of going back to that old place, [I] keep on reminding myself to ‘Keep on doing it. Keep on practicing it’. In that way if you’re practicing the positive thing, it will become your lifestyle.”

“I’m currently working so after participating in this campaign, I try to be more positive [by] try[ing] to accept reality, be who I am and honestly, just

[do] a simple [action] like smil[ing]. Just a smile or just say “Hello” or to be more loving and [when] people are trying to talk to you, they want to share [their story with] you, [so] listen and just support them. Sometimes, we can’t support them financially. Just a support like emotionally, spiritually can help. [T]hat’s what I’m trying to do. Just a simple smile, you can make someone’s day. Or compliment someone else like “Your shirt is so nice today.” That’s what I do. That’s what I practice. That’s what I do at work.”

(Euphoria)

4.4 Case Studies

There are two case studies from the interviews that significantly show the impact of the ‘Love Myself’ campaign in their lives. The first person in the case study is presented through the life of Chimmy. The interview began when she shared a tragic moment that happened in her life that caused major depression that she contemplated suicide.

“...three years ago, I started dating someone and then I got heartbroken for five months. The longingness of the man, I [couldn’t] disappear the thoughts of him inside my head. [For] five months, every day I thought of killing myself.

(Chimmy)

Chimmy shared how heavily reliant she was on her partner that it made the breakup more difficult to endure. It took Chimmy five months to let go of all the pain and hurt that she felt and carried.

“...when I [was] dating, I rely on that guy so, so much. Everything what he want[s], what he needs. I rely so much to him. So now that he’s gone, I said “No one can help you rather than you, yourself. Help yourself. No one can help you. Either than your family and friends, no one.” [I thought to] change myself for [the]better and become a better person. More positive and change your appearance and become happier.”

(Chimmy)

Chimmy mentioned that she took advice from people around her and from BTS, specifically from a member named Jimin. Jimin shared with his fans that when the band was going through a hard time, he was struggling as well (Delgado, 2019) and this helped Chimmy to relate and to get motivated from his story.

“I [took] advice from my family, my mom, my father and my sister and also, BTS. [W]hen Jimin show[ed] that he also suffered depression because of his lack of confidence, I th[ought that] what he [was] going through is the same as what I [was] going through. So if he can fight that, I also can fight that. [A]t that time, I start[ed] to fall in love with BTS and I go through all their lyrics in their song[s] and it [extremely] touch[ed] my heart. [F]rom there I build my own confidence and I build the positive thought that I can fight this. And it very helpful. Other than my family and friends, BTS and their campaign was very, very helpful.”

(Chimmy)

Chimmy shared that her partner found someone first then only proceeded to end the relationship. Chimmy felt replaced which caused her to contemplate on finding a replacement as well but realized that she needed to find herself first because that is what Chimmy learned through the campaign.

“I found myself. It’s not I found replacement. I don’t need a replacement. I don’t need a man who can take care of me.

(Chimmy)

Chimmy mentioned how one of the reasons she felt ‘replaced’ was due to appearance which sparked her to also take better care of her appearance to improve her mental health and self-esteem.

I don’t want to look good only for you. I want to look good for myself also. [Even] if you go, I can take care of myself, I can change myself, I can be prettier. That’s what my story.”

(Chimmy)

Chimmy embraced the heartbreak as she learnt through the campaign that no one deserves better love than she did. Chimmy learnt to set her goal on what she deserved and reaped the benefits of the message through the ‘Love Myself’ campaign.

Peach is the second participant highlighted for the case study. Peach opened the various mental illnesses that she struggled with and how the ‘Love Myself’ campaign was able to aid her through her illnesses and shape up her mindset and perspective. Peach shared how she was

diagnosed with a body image disorder called Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD) which is an illness that causes a person to emphasize their flaws in their appearances.

I was diagnosed with Body Dysmorphic Disorder which means that I don't know how I look [like]. [I]f I take a picture [or] I look at the mirror, it's always different. I don't really know how I look but when I start posting pictures about [the] 'Love Myself' campaign, [I learnt to accept that even though] I look different in every picture or I don't know how I look [like] but at least I can see friends and other [people] supporting me.

(Peach)

The struggle with BDD caused Peach to have a lack of self-esteem and it made her very shy however, when Peach started to participate in the 'Love Myself' campaign by posting pictures, receiving support allowed her to change her mindset towards herself.

I don't dress like this before. I was like very shy and I don't wear make-up because I'm scared of what people think [of me]. But then seeing all the fans [of BTS], especially the younger ones, they don't care whatever size they're in, whatever race, whatever colour. [This] really boosted a bit on my self-confidence at least on social media, not in real life.

(Peach)

Peach shared the amount of time she had to invest in coordinating to her BDD that she felt restricted and caused things to be delayed in her life.

I would take three hours just to coordinate what [to] wear and how [to] talk. There's a charm to accept yourself no matter how you look. I try to strive for that. [N]ot caring about things eventually g[ot] me a boyfriend. [A]pparently thinking too much really restricts you from doing things so you should just let loose. Things will come to you easily.

(Peach)

Another mental illness that Peach struggles with is major depression. Through the 'Love Myself' campaign, Peach learnt to take responsibility for her actions especially from emotional outbursts.

“I have major depression as well. I stop[ed] taking med[ication] at the end of 2018. I would have episodes every now and then but personally, when you have mental health issues, you would use that as an excuse sometimes to be [rude]. “I have major depression so why can’t you understand that I’m acting like this?” You would use that as a getaway from people.”

(Peach)

The campaign taught her the importance of showing kindness, love, and respect to herself and to others. Peach testified how the ‘Love Myself’ campaign helped her to improve relationships, quality of life and to be happy.

“But right now, if whatever happens, it’s on me. It’s not my mental health. I choose to be that way. Even it’s not true for a lot of people but gaining self-respect and true love, I’m on the way so not there yet. Just a bit. But seeing how I reached things that I could have never go through [before like with] this guy, my relationship with my family right now, my work, where I live right now, what I can afford, it’s really a relief. I wish I could tell my younger self “Just stop thinking about it. It’s going to be fine one day. It just takes time.””

(Peach)

Through these various life stories and statements, it highlighted the individual’s strong desire to self-regulate their behaviours and actions. The in-depth sharing of Chimmy and Peach’s stories as well as from other interviewees emphasizes on how the ‘Love Myself’ campaign shaped and changed their mindsets towards loving themselves, valuing themselves, respecting themselves, and improving themselves after participation.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussion

The literature of the study had discussed on the significant fame and global effect BTS has and how they had started the ‘Love Myself’ campaign. The ‘Love Myself’ campaign had a broader range of outreach due to the collaboration of the campaign with UNICEF and their #ENDviolence campaign. The ‘Love Myself’ campaign had proven effective through their total accumulated funding of 2.4 billion Won (RM 8 million) and social outreach of using the hashtag #BTSLoveMyself which had been used 10.5 million times as of April 30th, 2019 (*Love Myself*, n.d.). The problem statement of this study stated that there was a lack of audiences’ perspectives within the field of celebrity-led campaigns hence this research aimed to hear the voice of the fans of BTS who had taken part in the ‘Love Myself’ campaign and investigated the distinct perceived impact the campaign had in their lives.

This study used Ryan and Deci’s Self-Determination Theory (SDT) as the theoretical framework where the concept of the three basic psychological needs is used as the motivator to pursue the outcome of goal-oriented behaviours associated with autonomous motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The three basic human psychological needs of SDT are competence, relatedness, and autonomy. This theory was used to draw up the research objectives and questions to measure the impact of the ‘Love Myself’ campaign in the lives of ARMY.

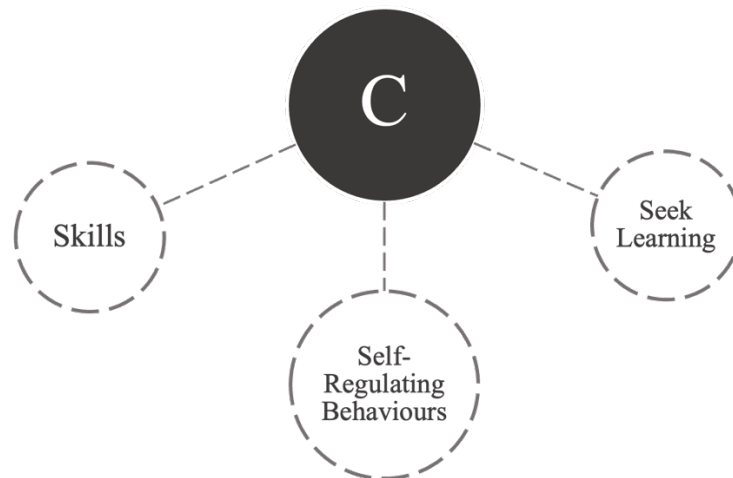
From Figure 1, the conceptual framework was constructed to display the idea on how SDT was measured in this research where ARMY should have a direct correlation with competence, relatedness, and autonomy to analyse the impact of the ‘Love Myself’ campaign.

Only when ARMY associate with these three needs then there is a linkage where the ‘Love Myself’ campaign has had an impact and change in the participant’s life.

The first research question and objective focused on competence which emphasizes on the engagement and satisfaction that a person felt from being in a new environment. The first research question was: how does ARMY perceive BTS’ ‘Love Myself’ campaign in their lives after participation? The fans mainly displayed their perception on their developments and improvements where they gained knowledge to better themselves so that they were stronger in areas they had weaknesses in.

Figure 2

Sub-themes of competence



Note. Figure drawn up by the researcher to display the sub-themes of competence (labelled as C).

In Figure 2, it displays the three sub-themes of competence formed during the analysis from the interviews conducted. Competence becomes impractical if there are reinforcements or forced motivators used for adaptation to take place. Competence emphasizes how an

individual will develop skills and knowledge while adapting into a new environment. Through the 'Love Myself' campaign, participants displayed the attainment of skills through increases in self-confidence, positive thinking skills, learning to love and prioritize self, improving physical appearance to care for their well-being, and acceptance of identity through race and sexuality.

Competence focuses on aiding individuals to adapt into the new environment better by allowing them to focus on improving themselves which causes self-regulating behaviours to be formed. These behaviours focus on the participants to reflect on themselves to adapt better in uncomfortable situations which was disabling them to love themselves. These behaviours were displayed through developing sound judgement, and controlling emotion-induced behaviours.

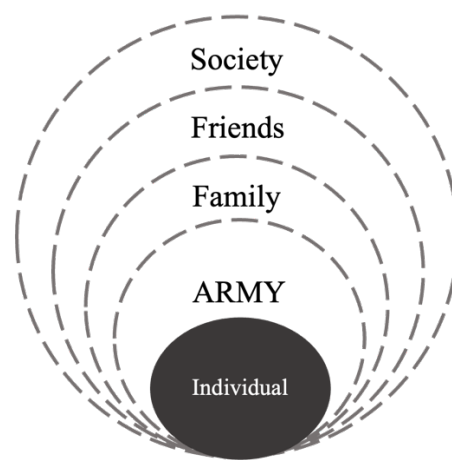
Competence engages on the individual to challenge themselves to become effective and even experience mastery in their new environment which caused the need to seek learning amongst participants. Participants developed goals to keep them engaged in the 'Love Myself' campaign to keep them challenged like to improve the quality of lifestyle by learning and improving in the Korean language as an example. If the campaign has no effect whatsoever to the participant, they will instantly disassociate the message of the campaign out of their lives. As the interview had taken place after a period of almost two years from the start of the campaign, every answer given by the participants would indicate that the changes in their surroundings have been consistent.

The second research question and objective focused on relatedness which highlights on the need to belong and connect within a 'society'. Relatedness allows a person to organise themselves into this 'society' to connect and function as a part of the group. As a member of the organization, it is unlikely to not face benefits and risks. The second research question was:

what are the benefits and/or the risks and challenges faced by the individual being a part ARMY after participating in the campaign? The participants expressed the support they would personally gain from being a part of ARMY and taking part in the campaign. It taught them to view the world in a different perspective and understand that there is more than meets the eye.

Figure 3

Social circle of relatedness



Note. Figure drawn up by the researcher to illustrate the individual within the social circle of relatedness

Figure 3 displays the overview of how relatedness was analysed and viewed from the perspective of individuals and how it affected their relationship with other people around them. The first circle around individuals is ARMY and how the relationship is like between the participants as an individual with the rest of the fandom. Participants shared the benefits they gained as they viewed as an individual where they saw the unity of the fandom, the ability to relate with other ARMY's stories, however, they also shared the risks and challenges they faced individually, and ARMY faced. Some participants also grew closer with their family and friends whilst some felt pressure and disconnection. They learnt to see the bad sides of people and embrace them as much as they are aware of their own bad sides and embrace them as well.

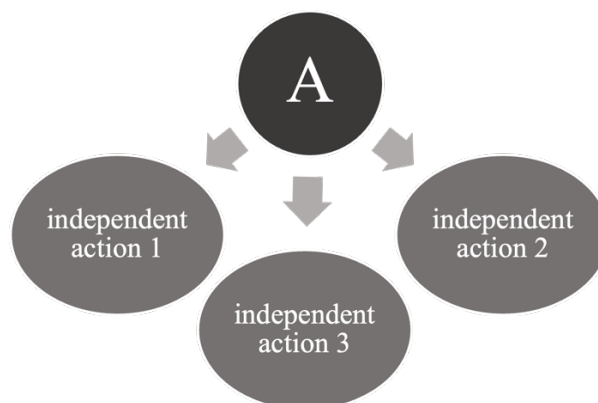
They expressed the bitterness of it where even though they want to become better, it is hard to break old habits and that there will be people around you that will not show support.

The campaign focuses on the person loving the ugly parts of themselves, giving hope to themselves and to pay it forward by helping others. Relatedness focuses on a group of people that embraces and relates with each other by sharing elements of security, intimacy, and togetherness. Within any group of people, there are bound to be positive feedbacks and clashes. Relatedness was able to paint a clearer picture of viewing the benefits and risks and challenges the individual faced from participating in the campaign.

The third research question and objective focused on autonomy which focuses on the individual's strong need to self-regulate their life and aim to develop behaviours that help support self-regulation. The focus of autonomy is to produce independent actions amongst participants. The third research question was: how does the campaign change the mindset of ARMY towards loving themselves after participation?

Figure 4

The process of autonomy



Note. Figure drawn up by the researcher to illustrate autonomy (labelled as A) that produces various independent actions (labelled as 1, 2, 3).

As displayed in Figure 4, autonomy highlights the importance of producing independent action made by the individual. These actions are not formed nor manipulated as the aim is to solely improve the individual and the people around them. Some of the autonomy-driven actions were formed from the workings of competence where competence first allowed the individual to gain a skill or knowledge which results in autonomy where the individual continues to have control over their actions. Most of the participants stated that they felt that they were not in control of their lives and that they were led by the opinion of others before they had participated in the campaign. All of the participants emphasized that the ‘Love Myself’ campaign allowed them to highlight their flaws and to remind themselves to ‘love themselves’ whenever they were reminded of those flaws. Autonomy sharpens the perspective to view how the ‘Love Myself’ campaign is effective in the lives of the participants through the independent actions that were produced.

The three research objectives were achieved as all of the data that was collected was able to answer the three research questions. The research analysis satisfied the conceptual framework where ARMY directly correlated with competence, relatedness, and autonomy to thoroughly display the impact of the ‘Love Myself’ campaign. Deci and Ryan (2000, p. 252) states that through intrinsic motivation, the person can prompt “cognitive, motor and social growth”. Two case studies were highlighted as they were able to paint a larger picture to view how the three basic psychological needs could work in an individual’s life simultaneously. The case study was given its own section to give the opportunity to highlight and emphasize the impact of the ‘Love Myself’ campaign in the lives of the two participants.

With most of the participants being female, they commonly stated the issue they face with self-esteem and their appearances. This lines up with a study done by Vetrix & Bangun (2022) where they researched on what the participants, who are ARMY, experienced through the word ‘love myself’ which the majority stated that they experienced insecurity. With the

focus of the ‘Love Myself’ campaign being on mental health, any participant of the campaign will relate to the message if they themselves are of need and associates with the messages. If a person does not struggle with loving themselves, the ‘Love Myself’ campaign would be of need to them. With the rise of the digital era, youths are finding themselves in a world where there is an online and offline identity (Chang & Park, 2018). This brings insight to the findings on why there is a common struggle with the self among the participants.

5.2 Implications

This study contributes to the lack of audience-focused research in celebrity-led campaigns which fills in the gap of the study. As a developing phenomenon, research have been conducted to understand the ‘Love Myself’ campaign, but this study focuses on the perceived impact of the campaign in the lives of engaged Malaysian fans and the personal voices of what they experienced. Therefore, all the new findings are additional information.

This study can bring insight to other researchers who are interested in studying on celebrity-led campaigns or the dynamic influence of BTS to their fans. The new findings of the perceived impact of the ‘Love Myself’ campaign can be used by future researchers when they are looking for audience-focused research in celebrity-led campaigns or looking for a method on how to analyse audience-focused research. Through the challenges and risks shared by the respondents, policymakers can introduce safer cyber regulations so that it aids youths who are unable to protect themselves from malicious comments. Organizations like UNICEF can also use this study by introducing more campaigns that could aid youth and their mental health not only in Malaysia but all over the world.

This study brings in a new approach in analysing humanitarian campaigns with the Self-Determination Theory. This is a fresh new approach in using human motivation to analyse the

effectiveness of a campaign. Through this research, it will be able to prompt future studies that uses SDT to analyse humanitarian campaigns, celebrity-led campaigns, and others relevant.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

There were limitations that the researcher had encountered during this study. The first challenge was gathering a larger number of respondents to represent a larger sample size. As the sample size was only gathered from Klang Valley, other ARMY from other states could not participate in the study. Although this study focuses on Malaysian fans, only participants within the Klang Valley participated. Additionally, as purposive sampling was used to select participants, the total number of 11 participants selected may present selection bias and cannot be generalized to represent other Malaysian fans.

As the Self-Determination Theory focuses on the three basic needs which is the competence, relatedness, and autonomy, any other information or themes that emerges in the research analysis is not able to be used or added into the research. For this research specifically, there were no other themes emerged that could not be added into the data analysis. However, with the usage of a specific theory like SDT and with the interview questions formed circulated around SDT, it is understandable why there was no additional data gathered. Although this may be looked like a positive aspect, using SDT is not the only way to analyse an impact of a campaign.

5.4 Recommendation for Future Research

For future researchers interested in expanding on this study, gender perspective can be considered. Specifically in the context of Malaysia, different age groups or even races can be

considered to analyse on the specific differences of each group, and it brings in additional colours and voices to the research field. This will add a richer data on audience-focused research in celebrity-led campaigns.

With some of the participants mentioning the importance of BTS' songs in adding them to love themselves, a recommendation of using the Self-Determination Theory to analyse the impact of BTS' music is recommended especially with other research done that states the positive impact of the lyrics of BTS' music (Larasati, 2022; Sihombing, 2021).

5.5 Conclusion

The study concludes that there are various perceived impacts that the BTS' 'Love Myself' campaign had on the lives of Malaysian engaged fans. In general, there was a positive perception from participating in the campaign by helping the participants to develop new skills and knowledge. Being a part of ARMY allowed the participants to relate with others in the community even though they experienced certain benefits and risks. This emphasized on the in-depth connection that a group encounters when facing challenges together only results in the intertwining comfort found amongst members. There was a drastic change in the mindset of ARMY towards loving themselves after participation as it resulted in the production of independent actions that the participants had never done previously or struggled to implement in their lives.

The conclusions from the research findings show strong interconnection of the three basic needs of the self-determination theory where the needs work as a motivator that sparks intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The more self-determined motivation is, the more likely it allows the individual to experience an intrinsic motivation that produces enjoyable behaviours and finds them to be interesting and pleasurable (Howard et al., 2020).

This audience-focused research enriches celebrity-led campaigns which lacks the voice of the people who have participated in these campaigns. Results from this analysis could bring insight to further future studies, but it is only one of the studies that could analyse the perceived impact that a celebrity-led campaign could have on their target audiences.

REFERENCES

- 5 *Ways to Love Myself by BTS*. (2018). Love Myself. https://www.love-myself.org/post-eng/bts_5ways_eng/
- About *LOVE MYSELF*. (n.d.). Love Myself. Retrieved June 13, 2019, from <https://www.love-myself.org/eng/about-lovemymself/>
- Alhamzah, T. (2022, January 28). #Showbiz: Malaysia ranks 7th in the world for tweeting the most about K-Pop. *New Straits Times*.
- Azungah, T. (2018). Qualitative research: deductive and inductive approaches to data analysis. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 18(4). <https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-D-18-00035>
- Babbie, E. R. (2014). *The Basics of Social Research* (Sixth edit). Wadsworth Publishing.
- Besley, A. (2018). *BTS: Icons of K-pop: The Unofficial Biography*. Michael O'Mara Books.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. In *APA handbook of research methods in psychology, Vol 2: Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological*. (Vol. 2, pp. 57–71). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/13620-004>
- Brockington, D. (2021). Celebrity advocacy. In *Routledge Handbook of Humanitarian Communication* (pp. 253–265). Taylor and Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315363493-16>
- Brockington, D., & Henson, S. (2015). Signifying the public: Celebrity advocacy and post-democratic politics. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 18(4), 431–448. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877914528532>
- Brown, H. (2019). *BTS: K-pop Kings: The Unauthorized Fan Guide* (Helen Brown & Hannah Daffern, Eds.). Buster Books.
- Bruner, R. (2018a). *Everything to Know About K-Pop Group BTS*. Time. <https://time.com/collection-post/5418827/bts-members/>
- Bruner, R. (2018b). *How BTS Is Taking Over the World*. Time. <https://time.com/collection-post/5414052/bts-next-generation-leaders/>
- Bryman, A. (2012). Social Research Methods. In *OXFORD University Press* (4th Editio). Oxford University Press.
- Budabin, A. C. (2020). Caffeinated Solutions as Neoliberal Politics: How Celebrities Create and Promote Partnerships for Peace and Development. *Perspectives on Politics*, 18(1). <https://doi.org/10.1017/S153759271900241X>
- Cha, E. (2018). *UNICEF Explains Why They Invited BTS To Speak At The United Nations*. Soompi. <https://www.soompi.com/article/1235871wpp/unicef-explains-invited-bts-speak-united-nations>
- Chang, W., & Park, S.-E. (2018). The Fandom of Hallyu, A Tribe in the Digital Network Era: The Case of ARMY of BTS. *Kritika Kultura*, 32. <https://doi.org/10.13185/kk2019.03213>

- Chiu, T. K. F. (2022). Applying the self-determination theory (SDT) to explain student engagement in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 54(S1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/15391523.2021.1891998>
- Cho, M. (2017). Domestic hallyu: K-pop metatexts and the media's self-reflexive gesture. *International Journal of Communication*, 11, 2308–2331.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The “what” and “why” of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01
- Delgado, S. (2019, September 11). *BTS's Jimin Opened Up to Jungkook About Coping With the Group's "Hard Times" in "Bring the Soul" Docuseries*. Teen Vogue.
- DOSM. (2022, November 8). *Demographic Statistics Third Quarter 2022, Malaysia*. Department of Statistics Malaysia Official Portal. <https://www.dosm.gov.my/portal-main/release-content/demographic-statistics-third-quarter-2022-malaysia>
- Doyle, J., Farrell, N., & Goodman, M. K. (2017). Celebrities and Climate Change. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Climate Science, November 2018*, 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228620.013.596>
- #ENDviolence. (n.d.). Love Myself. Retrieved June 13, 2019, from <https://www.love-myself.org/eng/about-endviolence/>
- Han, B. (2017). K-pop in Latin America: Transcultural fandom and digital mediation. *International Journal of Communication*, 11, 2250–2269.
- Hennink, M., & Kaiser, B. N. (2022). Sample sizes for saturation in qualitative research: A systematic review of empirical tests. *Social Science and Medicine*, 292. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114523>
- Herman, T. (2018). *BTS to Speak at United Nations for UNICEF's "Generation Unlimited" Launch*. Billboard. <https://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/k-town/8476070/bts-to-speak-at-united-nations-unicef-generation-unlimited-launch>
- Hickey, M. (2018). “We all Come Together to Learn About Music”: A Qualitative Analysis of a 5-Year Music Program in a Juvenile Detention Facility. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X18765367>
- Hopkins, S. (2018). UN celebrity ‘It’ girls as public relations-ised humanitarianism. *International Communication Gazette*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048517727223>
- Hopkinson, G. C., & Cronin, J. (2015). ‘When people take action’ Mainstreaming malcontent and the role of the celebrity institutional entrepreneur. *Journal of Marketing Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2015.1068214>
- Howard, J. L., Gagné, M., & Morin, A. J. S. (2020). Putting the pieces together: reviewing the structural conceptualization of motivation within SDT. *Motivation and Emotion*, 44(6), 846–861. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11031-020-09838-2>

- Jin, D. Y., & Yoon, K. (2016). The social mediascape of transnational Korean pop culture: Hallyu 2.0 as spreadable media practice. *New Media and Society*, 18(7), 1277–1292. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444814554895>
- Journey of LOVE MYSELF*. (n.d.). Love Myself. Retrieved June 15, 2019, from <https://www.love-myself.org/eng/journey-of-love-myself/>
- Jung, E. A. (2018). *40,000 BTS Fans Can't Be Wrong*. Vulture. <https://www.vulture.com/2018/10/bts-and-the-army.html>
- Katayama, R. (2021). Idols, celebrities, and fans at the time of post-catastrophe. *Celebrity Studies*, 12(2). <https://doi.org/10.1080/19392397.2021.1912255>
- Krause, A. E., North, A. C., & Davidson, J. W. (2019). Using self-determination theory to examine musical participation and well-being. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10(MAR). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00405>
- Larasati, M. F. (2022). SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF THE LOVE MYSELF MESSAGE IN THE BTS SONG LYRICS “EPIPHANY.” *Journal Communication Spectrum*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.36782/jcs.v12i1.2183>
- Lim, M., & Moufahim, M. (2015). The spectacularization of suffering: an analysis of the use of celebrities in ‘Comic Relief’ UK’s charity fundraising campaigns. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 31(5–6), 525–545. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2015.1020330>
- Love Myself*. (n.d.). Love Myself. Retrieved June 13, 2019, from <https://www.love-myself.org/eng/home>
- Magcamit, Y. (2018). *Don't Think It's Relevant For BTS To Speak At The UN General Assembly For UNICEF? Read This*. HelloKpop. <https://www.hellokpop.com/featured/bts-un-general-assembly-unicef/>
- Manticore-Griffin, N. (2011). K-Pop’s Soft Power. *In These Times*, 35(6), 32–33.
- Marshall, M. N. (1996). Sampling for qualitative research. *Family Practice*, 13(6), 522–525. <https://doi.org/10.1093/fampra/13.6.522>
- Menga, F., & Goodman, M. K. (2022). The High Priests of Global Development: Capitalism, Religion and the Political Economy of Sacrifice in a Celebrity-led Water Charity. *Development and Change*, 53(4), 705–735. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12723>
- Prior, M. T. (2018). Interviews and Focus Groups. In A. Phakiti, P. de Costa, L. Plonsky, & S. Starfield (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Applied Linguistics Research Methodology* (pp. 225–248). Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-59900-1_11
- Punch, K. F. (2003). *Survey Research: The Basics*. SAGE Publications Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781849209984>
- Punch, K. F. (2014). Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches. In K. Metzler (Ed.), *Sage Publications* (3rd Editio). Sage Publications.

- Reddy, G., & Selvanathan, H. P. (2020). Multiracial in Malaysia: Categories, classification, and campur in contemporary everyday life. In *The Palgrave International Handbook of Mixed Racial and Ethnic Classification*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-22874-3_34
- Richey, L. A., & Brockington, D. (2020). Celebrity Humanitarianism: Using Tropes of Engagement to Understand North/South Relations. *Perspectives on Politics*, 18(1). <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592719002627>
- Romano, A. (2019). *BTS, the band that changed K-pop, explained*. Vox. <https://www.vox.com/culture/2018/6/13/17426350/bts-history-members-explained>
- Russell, M. J. (2014). *K-pop now!: the Korean music revolution*. Tuttle Publishing.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68>
- Scott, M. (2015). The role of celebrities in mediating distant suffering. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 18(4), 449–466. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877914530038>
- Sihombing, L. H. (2021). Analyzing the Impact of BTS on Resolving the Problem of Youth Mental Health. *JISIP (Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Pendidikan)*, 5(2). <https://doi.org/10.36312/jisip.v5i2.1801>
- Silk, K. J., Perrault, E. K., Nazione, S. A., Pace, K., & Collins-Eaglin, J. (2017). Evaluation of a Social Norms Approach to a Suicide Prevention Campaign. *Journal of Health Communication*, 22(2), 135–142. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10810730.2016.1258742>
- Support LOVE MYSELF*. (n.d.). Love Myself. Retrieved June 15, 2019, from <https://www.love-myself.org/eng/support>
- Unger, M. A. (2015). The Aporia of Presentation: Deconstructing the Genre of K-pop Girl Group Music Videos in South Korea. *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, 27(1), 25–47. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jpms.12109>
- UNICEF. (2013). *Make the Invisible Visible: UNICEF urges louder voices and urgent action to fight violence against children*. Press Release. https://www.unicef.org/media/media_70050.html
- UNICEF. (2017). *A familiar face. Violence in the lives of children and adolescents*.
- Vetrix, E. E., & Bangun, C. R. A. (2022). Shared Experienced of ‘Love Myself’ Tagline Among BTS Fans. *Jurnal Komunikasi Nusantara*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.33366/jkn.v4i1.89>
- Wright, K. A. M., & Rosamond, A. B. (2021). NATO’s strategic narratives: Angelina Jolie and the alliance’s celebrity and visual turn. In *Review of International Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210521000188>

APPENDICES

Appendix A Consent Form

PERCEIVED IMPACT OF BTS' 'LOVE MYSELF' CAMPAIGN IN THE LIVES OF ENGAGED FANS

Principal Investigator

Jung Bo Eun

Student at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman pursuing Masters of Communication

016-*** ****

b*****6@gmail.com

Purpose of Study

The use of celebrities in celebrity-led campaigns often suggests marketing communication as celebrities are able to influence socially, politically and economically to the engaged audiences hence making the messages of the campaign easy to spread. Celebrities glamorize the celebrity figure and completely erases the aid recipients of the campaign. Through BTS involvement in inspiring people to speak of love and to share hope, the 'Love Myself' campaign intends to create a safe place and a better place where youths will be able to dream of tomorrow.

This study utilises qualitative methodology to study the perceived impact that the 'Love Myself' campaign has on the lives of engaged fans through the perception of competence, autonomy, and relatedness.

Benefits

By completing the study, you will be contributing towards a better understanding and knowledge of celebrity-led campaigns in the audience-focused engagement. Additionally, it is hoped that what is discovered will be able to motivate future campaigns run by celebrities to be impactful on the audiences as much as the celebrities are impactful on the engagement of the campaign.

Study Procedures

An interview conducted will consist of 5 sections and will take approximately 20 to 40 minutes to complete depending on the participants' answers. The interview will be recorded but it is only for analysis and further compilation for data.

Confidentiality

All of the participants' responses will remain anonymous and all the data will be kept private and confidential. This research is conducted for educational purposes only. The participant's name will not be linked to the research materials and will not be identified in the reporting of the results from the research.

Contact Information

Participants of this interview should feel free to contact the principal investigator through the contact information listed above if there are any concerns or questions that need clarification.

Consent

I have read and understood the provided information. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study. I understand that the risks I may face are minimal and I agree to take part in this interview.

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

Principal Investigator

Signature

Date

Appendix B

Personal Data Protection Notice (PDP) Statement

PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION NOTICE

Please be informed that in accordance with Personal Data Protection Act 2010 (“PDPA”) which came into force on 15 November 2013, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (“UTAR”) is hereby bound to make notice and require consent in relation to collection, recording, storage, usage and retention of personal information.

1. Personal data refers to any information which may directly or indirectly identify a person which could include sensitive personal data and expression of opinion. Among others it includes:

- a) Name
- b) Identity card
- c) Place of Birth
- d) Address
- e) Education History
- f) Employment History
- g) Medical History
- h) Blood type
- i) Race
- j) Religion
- k) Photo
- l) Personal Information and Associated Research Data

2. The purposes for which your personal data may be used are inclusive but not limited to:

- a) For assessment of any application to UTAR
- b) For processing any benefits and services
- c) For communication purposes
- d) For advertorial and news
- e) For general administration and record purposes
- f) For enhancing the value of education
- g) For educational and related purposes consequential to UTAR
- h) For replying any responds to complaints and enquiries
- i) For the purpose of our corporate governance
- j) For the purposes of conducting research/ collaboration

3. Your personal data may be transferred and/or disclosed to third party and/or UTAR collaborative partners including but not limited to the respective and appointed outsourcing agents for purpose of fulfilling our obligations to you in respect of the purposes and all such other purposes that are related to the purposes and also in providing integrated services, maintaining and storing records. Your data may be shared when required by laws and when disclosure is necessary to comply with applicable laws.

4. Any personal information retained by UTAR shall be destroyed and/or deleted in accordance with our retention policy applicable for us in the event such information is no longer required.

5. UTAR is committed in ensuring the confidentiality, protection, security and accuracy of your personal information made available to us and it has been our ongoing strict policy to ensure that your personal information is accurate, complete, not misleading and updated. UTAR would also ensure that your personal data shall not be used for political and commercial purposes.

Consent:

6. By submitting or providing your personal data to UTAR, you had consented and agreed for your personal data to be used in accordance to the terms and conditions in the Notice and our relevant policy.

7. If you do not consent or subsequently withdraw your consent to the processing and disclosure of your personal data, UTAR will not be able to fulfill our obligations or to contact you or to assist you in respect of the purposes and/or for any other purposes related to the purpose.

8. You may access and update your personal data by writing to us at bonniej1226@gmail.com

Acknowledgment of Notice

I have been notified and that I hereby understood, consented and agreed per UTAR above notice.

I disagree, my personal data will not be processed.

.....
Name:

Date:

Appendix C

Interview Questions

Start-up Questions:

- 1) Since when have you started listening to BTS? And since when have you been an ARMY?
- 2) Have you heard of the 'Love Myself' campaign by BTS? Have you participated in the campaign (i.e. used the hashtag #BTSLoveMyself; donated to the relevant websites; etc)?
- 3) What is your overview opinion towards the 'Love Myself' campaign?

Competence (RO1+RQ1)

- 4) After taking part in the 'Love Myself' campaign, what are the things you have noticed that has changed in your surroundings?
- 5) Are there new changes in your life that you haven't done before the campaign?
- 6) Is there a new goal or accomplishment that you have decided to aim for after participating in the campaign?

Relatedness (RO2+RQ2)

- 7) What are the benefits and/or the risks and challenges that you have faced after participating in the campaign?
- 8) What are the benefits and/or the risks and challenges that the entire ARMY fandom has faced after the launch of the campaign?
- 9) The hashtag #BTSLoveMyself has been used by ARMY approximately 10.5 million times. How do you feel as an ARMY and seeing this kind of results created by the movement as well as the fandom?
- 10) If you have seen other fans sharing their message on the campaign, how does that make you feel as an ARMY?

Autonomy (RO3+RQ3)

- 11) What are the things you have noticed that has changed in your behaviour after participating in the campaign?
- 12) The aim of the campaign is to help a person to empower their own self to gain self-respect and true love that they can share with the rest of the world. After participating in the campaign, how does this sentence apply to your life?
- 13) When it comes to you, do you believe that you have control in your life? Try to view this question in terms of before and after you have participated in the campaign.

Closing Questions:

- 14) Of all the things we have discussed, do you think your life would be different once the 'Love Myself' campaign comes to an end in November?
- 15) What do you think the view of the campaign will be once the campaign ends?

