

Fandom Dynamics on Stan Twitter: A Grounded Theory

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ABSTRACT

Fandom culture is a fast-evolving trend on Twitter as its algorithm involving event hashtags is an efficient way to have their idol's events be on a top trend. Stan Twitter is a section of Twitter dedicated to celebrities. Stan Twitter has been noted not only for its aptly fanatic culture and behavior but also for the creative content made by stans. The study used qualitative methods to explore the experiences of stan account users on twitter. Interviews with stan account users were analyzed using grounded theory methodology. A theory was developed that shed light on what motivates stan account users to produce creative content such as fan art, fan made videos and fanfiction. Results indicate that creating these contents gave them a feeling of self-gratification and made them feel empowered. Interactions with other fans who supported their content also boosted their self-esteem. These emotions translated into their real-life identity as they became more productive in doing academic requirements and in the workplace. Engagements and conversations from their account followers also drive them to produce more relevant content. Results further revealed that engagements such as retweets and comments were preferred over views. With the emergence of these results, a theory on the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of stan twitter account users was developed. It can then be concluded that self-gratification, the amount and kind of engagements, and the benefits for the society are major factors on the motivation of creative content production.

Keywords

Fandom Dynamics, Stan Twitter, Motivation, Engagement, Twitter Fandom

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Introduction

Rationale

Fandom is a group of fans who form social networks with one another based on their common interest in reading texts and watching shows, and the fans in turn write or otherwise produce materials for that text or show (Gooch, 2008). Materials may vary from art, poems, short stories to videos. Fans are able to embrace and internalize the positive and inspiring messages promoted by their idols. Fans even claim that the music or characters they follow are improving their happiness and mental health.

Fandom is a fast-evolving trend on Twitter as its algorithm involving event hashtags that is an efficient way to have their idol's events be on a top trend. Stan Twitter is a section of Twitter dedicated to celebrities. Stan Twitter has been noted for its aptly fanatic culture and behavior. Here is a basic definition of terms and history of terms used on Stan Twitter as stated by Goswami (2020), the word stan comes from Eminem's song "Stan," released two decades ago. It is defined as an obsessive fan of something. The word stan was added to the Oxford English Dictionary in 2017. The term was originally used as a noun, but over time evolved and began to be used as a verb.

These stans often talk about a piece of media or a celebrity, and sometimes engage in "shipping." Shipping is known as liking the relationship between two or more people, usually of a pair of celebrities who are working on a series or movie. The origin of the term comes from the last half of the word "relationship." Originally, being called a stan was considered an insult, but the term has gained popularity on Twitter, and when one applies it to themselves, it becomes a "badge of honor" (Michel, 2019).

In stan twitter, a parasocial relationship exists wherein the celebrity is oblivious to the individuals that make up their fandom. This type of relationship is one-sided; that is, fans obsess while the celebrity is unaware of their very existence as individuals (Angus, 2019 as cited in Chien, 2020).

We are living in the digital age and rely on technology to communicate with people all over the world; thus, social media platforms have significant impacts on how netizens express identities and perceive others' as well. These platforms are crucial to online fandoms because it is often how fans meet potential friends. These online fandoms have been growing through social media platforms: including but not limited to twitter and Instagram, fans coming across new

profiles, seeing that they share similar interests, and assuming that they would get along based on the way they present themselves. Path analysis done by Arunrangsiwed (2018) revealed that fan identification has a positive effect on fan activities in class. The results of the study show that fan identification increases students' learning motivation, mediated by enjoyment and expression. Fan activities included writing fan fiction and making fan art. The major data collection was done in DeviantArt.com since this website had a large number of fan artists.

Fandom and fandom studies can shed light to the community about what it means to think of literacy as a social skill and cultural competency rather than simply being an individualized accomplishment (Jenkins, 2019). Since there are limited studies that deals with the dynamism of twitter fandoms, this motivates the researcher to explore the implications of fandom activities on stan twitter. Knowledge in this field may deem vital for planning activities that may elicit a positive impact on a persons' satisfaction with life and performance in work and in school.

Literature Review

A fan is a person who has a positive emotional relationship with something or someone famous, such as a celebrity or an idol. Fans may express admiration by recognizing the celebrity's style or creativity within a popular culture. Fans are often involved in a specific community, known as a fandom, which produce certain practices and social roles (Duffett 2013, as cited in Lacasa et. al., 2017). Social roles include but are not limited to content creators and content consumers. In addition, fans are interpreters of texts, with these texts underpinning the construction of their identities (Jenkins 2013, as cited in Lacasa et. al., 2017).

Jenkins (2019) quotes the speech of Naomi Novik on behalf of the Archive of Our Own at the Hugo Awards last August 2019, "All fanwork, from fanfic to vids to fanart to podfic, centers the idea that art happens not in isolation, but in community. All of our hard work and contributions would mean nothing without the work of the fan creators who share their work freely with other fans, and the fans who read their stories and view their art and comment and share

bookmarks and give kudos to encourage them and nourish the community in their turn."

Manifold (2009) reveals how young people from nineteen countries have begun to manipulate media conveyed narratives of popular culture in ways that may be interpreted as culture creation. While these young people learn art making within the global fandom, or an online community of fans and fan artists, they are able to create relationships to the subject and process of fanart making, fellow fan artists and the fan community that are similar to those of the medieval European craftsman to his craft, guild workshop and community. With the digital age, appreciation of local and global aesthetics is quickened. This inspires individuals and creates a desire to develop a high level of skill. Knowledge, skill, and aesthetic appreciation, however, do not necessarily lead fan artists to desire art-related careers. Rather, many fan artists are satisfied to experience fanart making as a hobby.

Statement of Objectives

The aim of this study is to generate a theory on netizens' information as fans and fandom dynamics on twitter which can shed light on: (1) how the fans feel and behave while supporting their idols; (2) the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation which led fans to create creative content such as fan art, fan videos and fanfiction; (3) how the fans' online identity translate to their real-life identity; and (4) how the fan activities affect their real-life satisfaction and productivity.

Research Design: Grounded Theory

The Grounded theory using the Glasserian approach (1978, as cited by Abadiano, 2014), a qualitative research method, was utilized to investigate the phenomenon of interest in this preliminary study to generate the theory on fandom dynamics algorithms on stan twitter.

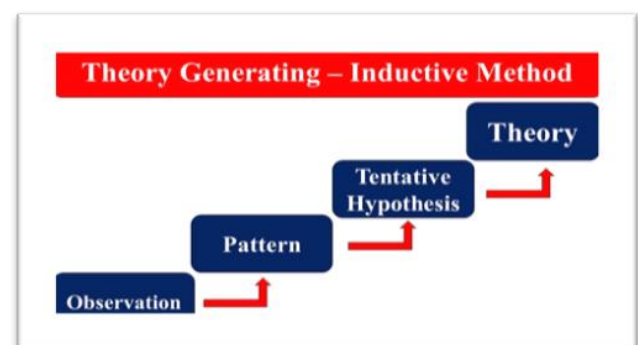


Figure 1: RESEARCH PROCESS FOR THE THEORY GENERATION

Research Environment

This study was conducted in cyberspace and all communication with the participants were done online. The researcher interviewed the participants individually using available platforms such as Zoom, Line Chat and Google Meet.

Research Participants/Informants

The researcher used purposive sampling. The researcher tapped twelve (12) stan twitter account users. The selection criteria were as follows: a.) he/she should be an active creator of creative content; b.) is a regular online user.

Research Sampling

Snowball sampling was used by the researcher. The researcher communicated with the stan twitter accounts through direct message. To supplement the study, the researcher studied the virtual sampling on the stan twitter account's engagement on their posts with creative content to capture the fandom dynamics on stan twitter.

Research Instrument

The research utilized a semi-structured interview schedule consisting of two parts – Part A, demographic information and Part B, semi-structured questions.

The interview guide was constructed in English. Content validity of the constructed interview questions was assessed by the experts and the adviser.

Data Gathering

Data Collection: The researcher conducted a semi-structured interview with the twelve (12) stan twitter account users. Some participants were contacted through twitter direct message through snowball sampling. The interview was done using Line application video call, Zoom Meetings and Google Meet. All the participants were briefed about the study and electronic informed consents were solicited for their participation and the use of in-app and third-party screen recorder applications to record the interview. Based on their answers and feedback, the researcher revised, and fine-tuned the guide questions.

Coding and Categorizing Data: In this stage, the researcher listened to all the transcribed interview data in the recordings several times before the transcription to be more immersed and be able to capture the meanings the participants wanted to convey. This stage was done immediately after the initial interview with the participants was from line-by-line readings. Maximum codes were constructed about concepts related to the fans who have stan twitter accounts and fandom dynamics, where some concepts were similar to others while others were not. Themes were formulated through the progress of line-by-line coding and integration of sub-categories through constant comparison, modification and analysis of concepts.

Theoretical Sampling, Constant Comparison. In this stage, the interview was guided based on developed concepts and sub-categories from the findings of preliminary gathered data of the stan twitter account users' dynamics. Participant sampling was directed by emerging constructs and categories. Throughout the data gathering and analysis period, emerging categories or themes were constantly compared with each other, similar concepts were integrated and contrasting categories were further explored to identify the solid concepts related to the study topic.

Constant comparative analysis was the primary strategy in the integrated coding and analyzing stages of grounded theory (Duchscher and Morgan, 2004 as cited by Abadiano, 2014). The goal was to clarify concepts and test hypotheses derived from the data while producing precise descriptions (Jeon, 2004 as cited by Abadiano, 2014). The making of constant comparisons during data analysis and collection, and theoretical sampling occurred simultaneously in order to ensure that the researcher could actually construct a theory that was grounded in the data (Jeon, 2004).

Theory Generation Process

Grounded Theory research method operates almost in a reverse fashion from traditional social science research. Rather than beginning with a hypothesis, data collection is the first step which is done through a variety of methods. From the data collected, the key points are marked with a series of codes, which are then extracted from the text. The codes are grouped into similar concepts in order to make them more workable. From these

concepts, categories or themes are formed, which become the basis for the creation of a theory (Allan, 2003, as cited by Abadiano, 2014).

Results and Discussion of Preliminary Study for Theory Development

The results of preliminary study for theory development were presented as follows: demographic profile of participants, findings of the fandom dynamics of twitter stan account users as content creators presented in Theoretical Themes or Categories.

Demographic Information. The total study participants consisted of twelve senior high school students, college students and working professionals. There are eleven females and one male participants. All of the participants are Filipino citizens. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 30. Seven are students while five are working professionals. All of them have a computer at home and have Internet access. All of the participants are known content sharers and a stan account user in twitter.

Making Creative Content and Engagements on Stan Twitter – Feelings and Motivations

The participants expressed their feelings and motivations with regard to making of creative content for their respective fandom which they shared to their stan twitter accounts. Varied answers surfaced after a one-on-one interview was done.

The following comments were used in formulating and categorizing codes of the study.

Participant 1

"I was inclined with AUs but I failed to find AUs regarding my idols. So that's when I started to write my own AU so that I can read something with regards to my idols."

"Whenever I stan, because of them, I have discovered and met a lot of very awesome people. They (my mutuals) make my journey on stan twitter. Super ganda ng experience ko sa stan twitter. They make the journey more worthwhile."

"It greatly boosted my self-esteem. Especially my confidence with regards to writing. Because of their words, I feel more confident with my works and sharing it to other people. A producer tapped me and asked me if I want to make a script and

produce it one day. It really boosted my confidence. I have grown more confident about myself even in real life."

Participant 2

"I won't say that I am influenced by them but I do appreciate that they are very vocal in using their platform especially for politics. For me, I am not influenced by them (kasi ganyan na ako in real life) but I want other people to be influenced by them especially in being vocal about political issues. Because if those you are stanning, can do it. So can you."

"You can be you by hiding behind a different display picture and display name. You can be more you in stan twitter. Even if it is online, this is the life that you have always wanted. To be able to share your story. To be able to connect with a friend who relates to your stories too. To be able to hear stories from other people. This is something that I cannot do with my family especially at the start of the quarantine. In an AU, you can also create your own ending. You can save and help people na hindi mo natulungan in real life."

"Part of the donation drive for the students who were affected by the pandemic or victims on the typhoons. I was able to help in organizing this with the author friend mentioned earlier."

Participant 3

"I made a stan account so that I could post my stories somewhere."

"The reason why I write fanfiction is because I am a very picky reader. I'm very specific. I was looking for a fanfic online with a certain genre and I couldn't find one, so I thought why not make my own since no one's going to write it? So why not write it myself anyway. So I did."

"I met a lot of really nice people online. I'm actually very shy in person. I met a lot of people that are more outgoing than me, so they'd always strike a conversation because I could never keep a conversation going by myself. They try their best to talk to me even when I take hours to reply and I like that."

"It boosted my self confidence because when it comes to writing, I get insecure a lot. I get insecure very easily. So when it came to posting stories on twitter, you know people would

compliment you a lot and boosted a lot of self confidence in me."

Participant 4

"Gusto kong magbasa ng fanfic with my idols kaso wala akong makita na in filipino language. Sobrang rare. Nagsulat ako sa gusto kong basahin pero dalawa lang kami ng friend ko na nagbabasa. She encouraged me to post the story on twitter and I was so surprised when my first story got past 100 likes."

"Na motivate akong ituloy at tapusin ang story because I want to see how it ends and that may mga nag-aabang sa updates."

"Nagsusulat ako ng fanfic for fun at parang nagiging warm up before I write for a research for work. Kaya nagiging productive."

"The reactions I got from the readers were a big thing for me. Every comment, every quote retweet nila during every update boosts my confidence to write more and edit more, especially for social media AU that includes pictures, kasi it's positive reinforcement."

"I gained friends from writing because they interacted with my story. From the AU, ang dami kong nagging friends na nakakausap and even other AU writers. Some of us nagkaka-interact na rin sa timeline."

"I have written for a fundraiser. Nag-expect ako ng financial gain from the last four fanfictions that I wrote but not for me, for the fundraiser. Yung for typhoon victims."

"For fans, kaya nating mag provide ng content basta mabigyan lang tayo ng resources kasi ang galing ng drive ng fans kapag may gusto silang e try, nagagawa lahat."

Participant 5

"Gusto ko ang interactions sa stan twitter. Nakikinig ako sa mga payo ng mga mas nakakatanda na nakaka-interact sa stan twitter on how to behave online."

"Masarap sa feeling na yung sinusulat ko ay nakaka-inspire rin sa ibang tao."

"May sinalihan akong fundraising once noong may typhoon. Masarap siya sa feeling na

makatulong. Kasi yung works ko nakatulong upag mag-donate para sa mga nasalanta sa bagyo."

"Mas outgoing ako sa stan twitter, I can get out of my comfort zone and interact with different persons from other country. Sa personal, hindi naman po ako masyadong friendly."

"Sobrang satisfied ako kasi sobrang feeling ko na productive ako dahil ang rami kong nasusulat na fanfiction, na edit na photos and videos."

Participant 6

"I write for myself. I just want somewhere I could put my works and things like that. I mainly do stuff for myself."

"I want to people to see my idols the way I see them. That is the reason why I edit photos, videos and stories."

"Nakakaproud isipin na may mga tao na namotivate at na-inspire sa mga ginagawa naming mga author."

"When there are comments and quote retweets, parang Wow! Somebody noticed me. Nakakagaan sa loob na somebody appreciates the things that I do, the edits and the stories that I write."

"Actually, I'm part of this donation drive project. We give the funds to the affected people sa typhoon. I was thankful to be one of the authors. Ang saya sa feeling na kahit wala kang maibigay pero through my writing, I was able to help people."

"Being on stan twitter makes me happy. Being one of the fans na nakakakilala sa kanila (my idols). Masaya rin ako na nakakausap ang ibang big account content creators. Doon rin ako masaya, sa pagfollow back nila."

"I gained friends, I gained family, I gained a support na hindi ko nakukuha in real life, nakukuha ko sa stan twitter. It has been a great part of my life."

Participant 7

"As a fan, yung mga bagay na hindi ko nakikita sa kanila on-screen, ako na magsusuplay. Ikaw na yong naggagawa. That's why na momotivate ako magsulat. Kasi yung gusto kong makita na hindi nila pinapakita, sinusulat ko nalang. I write for self-satisfaction. I love writing. Kaya doon ko

binubuhos ang oras ko sa pagsusulat. Love actually inspires me."

"Gusto ko ang twitter kasi medyo anonymous siya. I'm contented with it. Okay na ako sa readers ko kahit ilan lang sila. Mas vocal ako sa stan twitter kasi siyempre anonymous siya. In real life, dapat filtered ang mga sasabihin ko. Open ako sa stan twitter unlike sa personal account."

"Mas vocal ako sa stan twitter kasi siyempre anonymous siya. In real life, dapat filtered ang mga sasabihin ko. Open ako sa stan twitter unlike sa personal account. Mas maingat ako in real life kaysa stan twitter."

"I'm a very social person. Gusto ko may ka interact. I found this in stan twitter. Na-satisfy ako."

Participant 8

"Even if they don't know you personally, masasabi mo na they are friends. Masasabi mo na co-fan ko yan, may pakialam ako diyan. Kapag malungkot yan, dadamayan ko yan. They are always there to support."

"Masaya. Nakaka-inspire po ako ng ibang tao. May nag-message sa akin na ikaw ang dahilan bakit ako nagsulat and wow, naka-inspire ka rin ng ibang magsulat may nagpapasalamat na nagiging reason to be happy dahil sa content ko. Na overwhelm ako sa mga ganoon may napapasaya ako dahil sa mga content ko."

"Nag-organize po kami ng write for a cause, nag open ng mga commission and yung na gain naming na money, dinonate naming lahat sa mga nasalanta sa bagyo."

Participant 9

"Ginagawa ko pa yung mga AU (alternate universe fanfiction) kasi kapag magbebreak ako from acads, tapos wala akong magawa, doon ko sinasalin ang pagfafangirl. Doon (writing fanfic) ko ineexpress ang pagfafangirl kasi hindi ako masyadong ma react sa twitter."

"Ang saya lang po makabasa ng mga reactions sa mga nakakabasa. Ang saya rin kapag may nagrerequest na gawan mo ito, yung ganito sana mangyayari."

"Yung stan account, place ko to relax, place ko rin to express. Mas masaya ang public account

kasi marami kang nakakausap at makikita mo sa timeline na parepareho kayo ng gusto."

"Different online identity and real identity. Yung mga real life friends ko po, hindi alam na ganoon ako magsulat sa stan twitter. In real life friends ko po, hindi sila fan ng idol ko kaya medyo boring dahil ako lang nagrereact sa private account ko. So, ibang tao po ako sa fan account."

"Mayroon po nagbayad sa akin once pero ngayon hindi po ako nagpapabayad sa mga request nila dahil nag eenjoy rin naman po ako sa pinapagawa nila."

Participant 10

"You have to make your own content for the couples you ship. May gusto akong mabasa, may gusto akong makita na wala doon sa series. So, naghahanap ako ng babasahin. Pero ang konti lang, kaya sabi ko, sige na nga, gagawin ko para sa sarili ko. Yung una kong ginawang AU (alternate universe fanfiction) that's just for self-gratification, self-indulgence kasi wala akong makita na gusto kong basahin."

"I do it wholeheartedly kasi parang everyday I receive messages na parang how they appreciate my work ganyan. Tapos may mga nag oopen up pa sa akin na they wait for updates everyday kasi parang iyon ang stress reliever nila after a long day of work."

"Sobrang nakaka-apekto sa self-esteem ko in a positive way. Before, I always read lang, May naiisip akong prompts but it stays in my head. Then noong nag start akong nagsulat, unti-unti dumadami ang nagbabasa. Yung turning point would be yung isang AU ko, biglang nag blow up. Nag rereact kapag masakit na."

"Nag organize kami ng donation drive, write for a cause. We gathered a lot of writers, around 25 writers kami doon. As a student, I do not have much to donate so sabi ko, what if I just offer my work baka naman may mag interest. Ayun nga student, online classes pa, I don't have allowance, I don't have source of income. Di ko alam kung paano tapos nakita ko ang chance na ito, maybe I can help a little. Hindi ko inexpect na ganoon kalaki ang ma-raise na funds. Sobrang nakakataba sa puso."

Participant 11

“When a story is stuck in my mind, it frustrates me. I was like, you know what, I’m gonna write it. I’m gonna write this for myself because I can’t have this story in my mind anymore. I have to let it go.”

“When I’m using my stan twitter, I feel like I can support my idols freely and let my feelings show that, hey, I appreciate these people. Stan twitter makes me free and don’t get scared to share how they feel.”

“Meeting a lot of people who shares the same interests, it actually made me more expressive in terms of how I feel in the community.”

“I also get motivated when people appreciate my work. Although we don’t admit it. It really feels good to have people appreciate your work. Some of my mutual online friends think that I can actually give love advice and that is a gain that I really, really love.”

“I’m making a lot of friends. Some are even calling me an older sister or even Mom.”

“I didn’t know that I was capable of creating especially photo edits included in stories, I didn’t know that I could become more creative in terms of writing and the idea of being able to actually boost my self-esteem.”

“I am actually representing my best friends about their struggles and I am happy that I am able to write about it and they really appreciate it that through my stories, their struggles are read and heard by an audience. I want to support them in terms of their battle in the community.”

Participant 12

“I created the stan twitter account to be vocal but everything else there is still me. Mas vocal lang sa stan twitter. Mas madaldal lang ako sa stan twitter.”

“Feeling ko na-ubusan ako ng babasahin na content. Kaya I wrote poems and shared on my stan twitter account. I had a collaboration with another author and tried to write one-shot fanfiction. After that, I made another one on my own.”

“Think of other people but not that much. Write it because you want to put your thoughts to letters.”

“The motivation you get from readers is really something. Masaya ako. Talagang sobrang saya

ko na may nagbabasa at nanonood sa video edits. Iba ang feeling ko na may mag like at quote retweet.”

“It boosted my self-esteem pero na challenge rin ako. I wanna challenge myself to continue making contents.”

“After I stay on stan twitter parang na refresh na ako and I can go on with my day.”

Categorizing, Coding and Themes

Using the Husserlian Method of Data Analysis and Collaizzis’ Thematic Process, the researcher anchored the steps, and just like Collaizzis who asserted that all research occurred through dialogue and that asking the right questions was tantamount to eliciting an accurate description of the experience from study participants (Collaizzi, 1978 as cited in Abadiano, 2014). On the other hand, Husserl’s focus was on meanings and identifying the essence or central theme of an experience as a way of furthering knowledge.

A descriptive analysis of transcripts revealed that eight (8) major themes characterized the participants’ responses to fandom activities. The eight major themes were labeled using direct quotations from the participants; this was done to express the original idea conveyed by the participants.

Themes, however, are not to be interpreted as independent from each other but as complementary aspects of a unified pattern. The eight (8) themes as deduced from the transcripts of the participants are:

Theme 1: Self-gratification

Theme 2: Realization of Unrealized Goals

Theme 3: Self-expression

Theme 4: Emulation

Theme 5: Source of Joy and Satisfaction

Theme 6: Building New Friendships

Theme 7: Self-esteem Boost

Theme 8: Feeling Good about Doing Good

Theme 1: Self-gratification

All the participants shared how they began their journey to produce creative content for their idols

in the fandom that they belong in. Most of the participants started their journey for self-indulgence or self-gratification as found in the responses below.

"I was inclined with AUs but I failed to find AUs regarding my idols. So that's when I started to write my own AU so that I can read something with regards to my idols." (P1)

"The reason why I write fanfiction is because I am a very picky reader. I'm very specific. I was looking for a fanfic online with a certain genre and I couldn't find one, so I thought why not make my own since no one's going to write it? So why not write it myself anyway. So, I did." (P3)

"Gusto kong magbasa ng fanfic with my idols kaso wala akong makita na in filipino language. Sobrang rare. Nagsulat ako sa gusto kong basahin pero dalawa lang kami ng friend ko na nagbabasa. She encouraged me to post the story on twitter and I was so surprised when my first story got past 100 likes." [I wanted to read fanfiction with my idols but I couldn't find one in the Filipino language. It was very rare. I wrote what I wanted to read although it was only my friend and I who read it. She encouraged me to post the story on twitter and I was so surprised when my first story got past 100 likes.] (P4)

"As a fan, yung mga bagay na hindi ko nakikita sa kanila on-screen, ako na magsusuplay. Ikaw na yong naggagawa. That's why na momotivate ako magsulat. Kasi yung gusto kong makita na hindi nila pinapakita, sinusulat ko nalang. I write for self-satisfaction. I love writing. Kaya doon ko binubuhos ang oras ko sa pagsusulat. Love actually inspires me." [As a fan, I will be the one to supply the things that I cannot watch, related to my idols, on-screen. I will be the one to make it, this is what motivates me to write. When the idols do not show what I want to see, I will simply write it down. I write for self-satisfaction. I love writing. I spend a lot of my time in writing. Love actually inspires me.] (P7)

"You have to make your own content for the couples you ship. May gusto akong mabasa, may gusto akong makita na wala doon sa series. So, naghahanap ako ng babasahin. Pero ang konti lang, kaya sabi ko, sige na nga, gagawin ko para sa sarili ko. Yung una kong ginawang AU (alternate universe fanfiction) that's just for self-

gratification, self-indulgence kasi wala akong makita na gusto kong basahin." [You have to make your own content for the couples you ship. I wanted to read and see something that did not happen in the series so I look for content I can read but there are only a few of these contents. So, I told myself that I will write one for myself. The first alternate universe I wrote was just for self-gratification and self-indulgence because I could not find anything that I wanted to read.] (P10)

"When a story is stuck in my mind, it frustrates me. I was like, you know what, I'm gonna write it. I'm gonna write this for myself because I can't have this story in my mind anymore. I have to let it go." (P11)

Theme 2: Realization of Unrealized Goals

Most of the participants write fanfiction or alternative universe (AU) stories, which also include editing photos and videos for their stories. Some of the participants shared their feelings of being satisfied in writing these alternative universe stories as they are able to see events unfold in the stories that did not happen in real life, some of whose responses can be found below.

"In an AU, you can also create your own ending. You can save and help people na hindi mo natulungan in real life." [In an alternate universe, you can also create your own ending. You can save and help people who you weren't able to help in real life.] (P2)

"I made a stan account so that I could post my stories somewhere." (P3)

"Different online identity and real identity. Yung mga real life friends ko po, hindi alam na ganoon ako magsulat sa stan twitter. In real life friends ko po, hindi sila fan ng idol ko kaya medyo boring dahil ako lang nagrereact sa private account ko. So, ibang tao po ako sa fan account." [Different online identity and real identity. My real life friends do not know that I write those content on stan twitter. My real life friends are not fans of my idol and so, I am the only one reacting in my private account and I find it boring. So, I am a different person in my fan account.] (P9)

"I am actually representing my best friends about their struggles and I am happy that I am able to write about it and they really appreciate it that

through my stories, their struggles are read and heard by an audience. I want to support them in terms of their battle in the community.” (P11)

Theme 3: Self-expression

Some participants expressed that they feel free in expressing themselves in their stan twitter accounts compared to their real-life interaction or in their social media platforms personal accounts.

“You can be you by hiding behind a different display picture and display name. You can be more you in stan twitter. Even if it is online, this is the life that you have always wanted. To be able to share your story. To be able to connect with a friend who relates to your stories too. To be able to hear stories from other people. This is something that I cannot do with my family especially at the start of the quarantine.” (P2)

“Mas vocal ako sa stan twitter kasi siyempre anonymous siya. In real life, dapat filtered ang mga sasabihin ko. Open ako sa stan twitter unlike sa personal account. Mas maingat ako in real life kaysa stan twitter.” [I am more vocal on stan twitter because there is anonymity. In real life, there is a need to filter what I say. I am open in my stan twitter unlike in my personal account. I am more careful in real life compared to how I am in stan twitter.] (P7)

“Ginagawa ko pa yung mga AU (alternate universe fanfiction) kasi kapag magbebreak ako from acads, tapos wala akong magawa, doon ko sinasalin ang pagfawangirl. Doon (writing fanfic) ko ineexpress ang pagfawangirl kasi hindi ako masyadong ma react sa twitter.” [I write the alternate universe fanfiction whenever I have a break from doing academic requirements. This is how I express myself as a fangirl. It is through writing fanfiction that I express myself as a fangirl since I do not react a lot on twitter.] (P9)

“When I’m using my stan twitter, I feel like I can support my idols freely and let my feelings show that, hey, I appreciate these people. Stan twitter makes me free and don’t get scared to share how they feel.” (P11)

“I created the stan twitter account to be vocal but everything else there is still me. Mas vocal lang sa stan twitter. Mas madaldal lang ako sa stan twitter.” [I created the stan twitter account to be

vocal but everything else there is still me. I am more vocal and talk more on stan twitter.] (P12)

Theme 4: Emulation

The participants shared that they often emulate what their idols practice or believe in. Some also expressed that it is not only their idols in real-life that they emulate but also the lesson imparted by the characters they play in the shows which they star in. Some responses expressing these are listed below.

“I won’t say that I am influenced by them but I do appreciate that they are very vocal in using their platform especially for politics. For me, I am not influenced by them (kasi ganyan na ako in real life) but I want other people to be influenced by them especially in being vocal about political issues. Because if those you are stanning, can do it. So, can you.” (P2)

Theme 5: Source of Joy and Satisfaction

The participants shared that being an account user in stan twitter is a hobby; hence, they feel happy as they support their idols through this platform.

“Sobrang satisfied ako kasi sobrang feeling ko na productive ako dahil ang rami kong nasusulat na fanfiction, na edit na photos and videos.” [I am very satisfied because I feel that I am productive because I am able to write a lot of fanfiction, edit photos and videos.] (P5)

“Being on stan twitter makes me happy. Being one of the fans na nakakakilala sa kanila (my idols). Masaya rin ako na nakakausap ang ibang big account content creators. Doon rin ako masaya, sa pagfollow back nila.” [Being on stan twitter makes me happy. I am happy being one of the fans who knows my idol. I am also happy that I am able to talk to other big account content creators. I am also happy that big accounts follow back my account.] (P6)

“Masaya. Nakaka-inspire po ako ng ibang tao. May nag-message sa akin na ikaw ang dahilan bakit ako nagsulat and wow, naka-inspire ka rin ng ibang magsulat may nagpapasalamat na nagiging reason to be happy dahil sa content ko. Na overwhelm ako sa mga ganoon may napapasaya ako dahil sa mga content ko.” [Happy. I am able to inspire other people. There was one time that someone sent me message saying that I am the reason why they are also

writing. I am able to inspire someone to write and there are also those who thank me because what I wrote became their reason to be happy. I became overwhelmed when someone feels happy because of my content.] (P8)

“Mayroon po nagbayad sa akin once pero ngayon hindi po ako nagpapabayad sa mga request nila dahil nag eenjoy rin naman po ako sa pinapagawa nila.” [I tried receiving payment once but I no longer ask for payment for their requests since I also enjoy what they are asking me to do (write).] (P9)

“I also get motivated when people appreciate my work. Although we don’t admit it. It really feels good to have people appreciate your work. Some of my mutual online friends think that I can actually give love advice and that is a gain that I really, really love.” (P11)

“The motivation you get from readers is really something. Masaya ako. Talagang sobrang saya ko na may nagbabasa at nanonood sa video edits.. Iba ang feeling ko na may mag like at quote retweet .” [The motivation you get from readers is really something. I very happy when someone reads my alternate universe stories and watch my video edits. There is this certain feeling when someone will like and quote retweet my works.] (P12)

“After I stay on stan twitter parang na refresh na ako and I can go on with my day.” [After I stay on stan twitter, I feel refreshed and I can go on with my day.] (P12)

Theme 6: Building New Friendships

Most of the participants enjoy the interactions with other fans especially those who reply to their shared creative content. Some interactions are also made through direct messages and they were able to gain new friends through these.

“Whenever I stan, because of them, I have discovered and met a lot of very awesome people. They (my mutuals) make my journey on stan twitter. Super ganda ng experience ko sa stan twitter. They make the journey more worthwhile.” (P1)

“I gained friends, I gained family, I gained a support na hindi ko nakukuha in real life, nakukuha ko sa stan twitter. It has been a great part of my life.” [I gained a kind of support that I

am not able to have in real life, I get to have it on stan twitter. It has been a great part of my life.] (P6)

“I’m a very social person. Gusto ko may ka interact. I found this in stan twitter. Na-satisfy ako. [I am satisfied.]” (P7)

“Even if they don’t know you personally, masasabi mo na they are friends. Masasabi mo na co-fan ko yan, may pakialam ako diyan. Kapag malungkot yan, dadamayan ko yan. They are always there to support.” [Even if they don’t know you personally, I can say that they are my friends. I can say, they are my co-fan so I care about them. When they are sad, then I will empathize with them. They are always there to support.] (P8)

Theme 7: Self-esteem Boost

All participants feel that their confidence was given a boost due to the reactions and messages that they receive from the creative content that they share on their stan twitter account. Some responses are mentioned below:

“It greatly boosted my self-esteem. Especially my confidence with regards to writing. Because of their words, I feel more confident with my works and sharing it to other people.” (P1)

“It boosted my self-confidence because when it comes to writing, I get insecure a lot. I get insecure very easily. So, when it came to posting stories on twitter, you know people would compliment you a lot and boosted a lot of self-confidence in me.” (P3)

“The reactions I got from the readers were a big thing for me. Every comment, every quote retweet nila during every update boosts my confidence to write more and edit more, especially for social media AU that includes pictures, kasi it’s positive reinforcement.” (P4)

“Sobrang nakaka-apekto sa self-esteem ko in a positive way.” [My self-esteem is affected in a positive way.] (P10)

“I didn’t know that I was capable of creating especially photo edits included in stories, I didn’t know that I could become more creative in terms of writing and the idea of being able to actually boost my self-esteem.” (P11)

“It boosted my self-esteem pero na challenge rin ako. I wanna challenge myself to continue making

contents.” [It boosted my self-esteem but I was also challenged. I want to challenge myself to continue making contents.] (P12)

Theme 8: Feeling Good about Doing Good

Some of the participants organized or took part in a “Write for a Cause” activity wherein the writers made a group in order to raise funds for beneficiaries, to name a few: students who are struggling financially in the online classes, jeepney drivers who lost their livelihood because of the pandemic, and victims of typhoons. They shared that it felt good to be able to help through creating or writing as they could not directly give money for the victims.

“Part of the donation drive for the students who were affected by the pandemic or victims on the typhoons. I was able to help in organizing this with the author friend mentioned earlier.” (P2)

“I have written for a fundraiser. Nag-expect ako ng financial gain from the last four fanfictions that I wrote but not for me, for the fundraiser. Yung for typhoon victims.” (P4)

“May sinalihan akong fundraising once noong may typhoon. Masarap siya sa feeling na makatulong. Kasi yung works ko nakatulong upang mag-donate para sa mga nasalanta sa bagyo.” [When there was a typhoon, I joined a fundraising once. It feels good when you are able to help.] (P5)

“Actually, I’m part of this donation drive project. We give the funds to the affected people sa typhoon. I was thankful to be one of the authors. Ang saya sa feeling na kahit wala kang maibigay pero through my writing, I was able to help people.” [Actually, I’m part of this donation drive project. We give the funds to people affected by the typhoon. Even though I do not have money to donate, I was able to help people through my writing. I felt happy.] (P6)

“Nag-organize po kami ng write for a cause, nag open ng mga commission and yung na gain naming na money, dinonate naming lahat sa mga nasalanta sa bagyo.” [We organized a write for a cause where we opened commissions. The money that we were able to collect was donated to the victims of the typhoon.] (P8)

“Nag organize kami ng donation drive, write for a cause. Ayun nga student, online classes pa, I don't

have allowance, I don't have source of income. Di ko alam kung paano tapos nakita ko ang chance na ito, maybe I can help a little. Hindi ko inexpect na ganoon kalaki ang ma-raise na funds. Sobrang nakakataba sa puso.” [We organized a donation drive; it was a write for a cause. I don’t receive allowance since classes are done online and I don’t have a source of income. I saw this as a chance, maybe I can help a little. I did not expect that we will be able to raise that much funds. It was a heartwarming feeling.] (P10)

Hypotheses Derived from the Results:

Sub-categories and the theoretical category of creative content production behavior were considered. Going into narrative interview analysis and interpretation, the researcher was then able to generate the following hypotheses to explore the ideas as explanations about the fandom dynamics of content creators on stan twitter. In grounded theory, hypothesis generation was always derived from the empirical data (Abadiano, 2014). The main method of forming a hypothesis in this study involved the analysis of the interviews with the participants. This means forming questions appropriate to the study. In each hypothesis generation, the researcher asked one central interview question and a few guided questions which are described below.

Generation of Hypothesis 1: The stan account users were asked about their journey when they began making creative content and sharing these to their stan twitter account.

These were extracted from the following themes:

Theme 1: Self-gratification

“I was inclined with AUs but I failed to find AUs regarding my idols. So that's when I started to write my own AU so that I can read something with regards to my idols.” (P1)

“As a fan, yung mga bagay na hindi ko nakikita sa kanila on-screen, ako na magsusuplay. Ikaw na yong naggagawa. That's why na momotivate ako magsulat. Kasi yung gusto kong makita na hindi nila pinapakita, sinusulat ko nalang. I write for self-satisfaction. I love writing. Kaya doon ko binubuhos ang oras ko sa pagsusulat. Love actually inspires me.” (P7)

Theme 2: Realization of Unrealized Goals

"In an AU (alternative universe), you can also create your own ending. You can save and help people na hindi mo natulungan in real life." (P2)

Theme 3: Self-expression

"You can be you by hiding behind a different display picture and display name. You can be more you in stan twitter. Even if it is online, this is the life that you have always wanted. To be able to share your story. To be able to connect with a friend who relates to your stories too. To be able to hear stories from other people." (P2)

Theme 7: Self-esteem Boost

"It boosted my self-confidence because when it comes to writing, I get insecure a lot. I get insecure very easily. So when it came to posting stories on twitter, you know people would compliment you a lot and boosted a lot of self confidence in me." (P3)

"I didn't know that I was capable of creating especially photo edits included in stories, I didn't know that I could become more creative in terms of writing and the idea of being able to actually boost my self-esteem." (P11)

Hypothesis 1: Gains for the self becomes a motivation for creative content production.

Proposition 1: Stan account users create content for self-gratification and to be able to realize goals that were not made possible in real life.

Generation of Hypothesis 2: The fans support their idols through their stan twitter accounts and also create an online identity that led them to create relationships. The daily interactions with other fans in their respective fandoms maintain and strengthen this relationship. Aside from supporting their idols, fans are also inspired to emulate their desired qualities.

These were extracted from the following themes:

Theme 4: Emulation

"I won't say that I am influenced by them but I do appreciate that they are very vocal in using their platform especially for politics. For me, I am not influenced by them (kasi ganyan na ako in real life) but I want other people to be influenced by them especially in being vocal about political

issues. Because if those you are stanning, can do it. So can you." (P2)

Theme 5: Source of Joy and Satisfaction

"Being on stan twitter makes me happy. Being one of the fans na nakakakilala sa kanila (my idols). Masaya rin ako na nakakausap ang ibang big account content creators. Doon rin ako masaya, sa pagfollow back nila." (P6)

Theme 6: Building New Friendships

"Whenever I stan, because of them, I have discovered and met a lot of very awesome people. They (my mutuals) make my journey on stan twitter. Super ganda ng experience ko sa stan twitter. They make the journey more worthwhile." (P1)

Formulation of hypothesis based on narrative findings of the study participants was: If the stan account users are able to interact with other fans who share the same feelings and inclinations, then they are motivated to continue creating various contents.

Hypothesis 2: Interaction and engagements inspire the fans to make and post creative content.

Proposition 2: Content creators in stan twitter stay and continue to post not only because of their idols but also because of the online community.

Generation of Hypothesis 3: The participants were asked whether they gained material rewards or earned from the creative content that they made and posted on their stan twitter accounts.

This was extracted from one theme:

Theme 8: Feeling Good about Doing Good

"May sinalihan akong fundraising once noong may typhoon. Masarap siya sa feeling na makatulong. Kasi yung works ko nakatulong upang mag-donate para sa mga nasalanta sa bagyo." (P5)

Formulation of hypothesis based on narrative findings of the study participants was: If the stan account users are able to help the community, then they are motivated to create contents.

Hypothesis 3: Creative contents are made as a selfless act and pave the way towards altruism in social media.

Proposition 3: Fans are inspired and motivated to create content when they see other people in challenging circumstances, feel empathy and have a desire to help.

Generated Grounded Theory:

The Fandom Dynamics of Content Creators on Stan Twitter are captured by the following features:

Making of creative content such as fanart, fan videos and fanfiction are at first done for one's self and it has a positive impact on the fan's self-esteem (*Theme 1, 7*). The fans also create the content to be able to experience, even only through vicarious means, goals that were not realized in real-life and to be able to say freely, share emotions and opinions that they were not able to express outside of stan twitter (*Theme 2, 3*).

Fans continue to make these creative contents for their idols and so that other people may be able to emulate the values shown by their idols in the fandom (*Theme 4*). Another motivation why the fans continue to make and share creative content is when they become an active part of a community. In the fandom community of stan twitter, they are able to interact with fans who are also content creators and fans who are content consumers. Their relationships often go beyond that of stan twitter as they are able to continue their engagements using other social media platforms and talk about topics outside of their idol's life and fandom community life (*Theme 6*). Since their online life becomes a reason for their happiness, they continue to do what makes them happy and satisfied (*Theme 5*). These motivations sustain the fans to make creative content.

Content creation as a community of fans begin when they have empathic feelings and altruistic behavior. Content creation on stan twitter is done for free but there are times when they could make a profit from this. The money that they earn are not for themselves but for those people in the society who experienced challenging

circumstances or disadvantaged situations. The fans, specifically content creators became an organized body and helped those in need. The fans used their stan twitter account platform for donation drives and fundraisers (*Theme 8*).

The theory can be summarized as follows:

“Fans are motivated to produce creative content for self-gratification, social interactions in the fandom community and altruism in social media.”

Fandom creative content may start from individuals that would be the idol and the fan. Producing creative contents start with a decision to make one and then, it would involve a community of fans to sustain the creation of fandom contents.

BERCERO'S FANDOM CONTENT CREATOR MOTIVATION THEORY

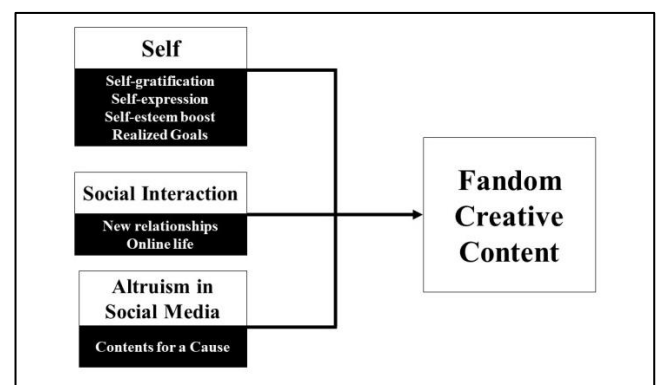


Figure 2: Bercero's Fandom Content Creator Motivation Theory

“Fans are motivated to produce creative content for self-gratification, social interactions in the fandom community and altruism in social media.”

Figure 1 above depicts the motivation of the stan account users to make creative content and share these varied contents on their stan twitter accounts.

Hypotheses for validation:

The main purpose of the study is to explore the fandom dynamics of stan twitter account users who are active in making creative content such as fanart, fan videos and fanfiction. Below are the hypotheses that need to be validated in the next chapters of the study:

1. Stan account users create content for self-gratification and to realize goals vicariously.

2. Content creators in stan twitter stay and continue to post not only because of their idols but also because of the online life that they have in twitter.
3. Fans are inspired and motivated to create content when it becomes a selfless act for society and when they are also able to channel funds for donation drives and fundraisers.

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