



NICHE MARKET IN FANGIRLING PHENOMENON

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ABSTRAK

Segmentasi khusus dalam mengatur target *audience* dalam *event* dapat memanfaatkan fenomena atau *trend* yang sedang terjadi di masyarakat. Salah satu fenomena yang saat ini tidak asing lagi bagi generasi milenial dan gen Z adalah fenomena *fangirling*. *Fangirl* adalah nama panggilan untuk sekelompok gadis yang sangat berdedikasi pada idola mereka dan bahkan terobsesi dengan mereka. Tulisan ini berisi bagaimana dampak penggunaan fenomena *fangirling* dalam pemasaran sebuah acara musik. Tujuan artikel ini adalah untuk memberikan gambaran implementasi strategi niche marketing komunitas *fangirls* yang dilakukan oleh ARMY Kuta Bali. Dengan menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif yang menggambarkan keadaan sebenarnya yang terjadi selama penelitian dan dipadukan dengan referensi teoritis baik dari jurnal maupun artikel yang berkaitan dengan strategi bisnis. Temuan dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa *fangirl* yang tergabung dalam suatu fandom memiliki potensi besar untuk membeli tiket acara yang diadakan khusus untuk idola kesayangannya, menjadi *repeater* dan juga mempromosikan acara tersebut kepada *fangirl* lainnya.

Kata Kunci :
Event, Niche Market, Niche Strategy, Fangirling, BTS

ABSTRACT

Specific segmentation in managing the target audience in events can take advantage of phenomena or trends that are currently happening in society. One of the current familiar phenomena to millennials and gen Z is the phenomenon of "fangirling." Fangirl is a nickname for a group of girls who are highly dedicated to their idols and even become obsessed with them. This paper contains how the impact of using the fangirling phenomenon in marketing of a music event. The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of the implementation of the niche marketing strategy by the fangirls community carried out by ARMY Kuta Bali. By using qualitative research methods which describe the actual situation that occurred during the research and combined with theoretical references from both journals and articles related to business strategies. The findings of this study shows that fangirls who join a fandom have great potential to buy tickets to events held specifically for their favorite idols, being repeaters and also promoting event to other fangirls.

Keywords :
Event, Niche Market, Niche Strategy, Fangirling, BTS

INTRODUCTION

The impact of globalization and the role of digitalization has brought changes in the trends and lifestyles of people, which are dynamic and moving fast. All issues heavily influence tourism, and it causes tourism need to adapt quickly to compete. Business owners are challenged to be adaptive and creative in getting the attention of potential buyers. In the event management business, organizers need to build a creative and feasible concept and be able to identify the target audience. The target in the event is an essential part in the planning stage of an event. (UOU, 2022) said that the beginning of the event starts with understanding the client profile, the brief for the event, the target audience and number expected, a major component of any event that follows is the preparation of the event budget preparation.

Planning an event is often adjusted to the latest trends in society. The idea of a planned event is something that is currently happening and has a lot of talks and high enthusiasm. By taking advantage of the latest phenomena, organizer can be more easily to find and determine trends. Several types of market trends are mentioned (Demand Jump, 2020) short-term market trends, intermediate market trends, and long-term market trends. In response to this, several recent studies consider niche market strategy as a tool in winning a business competition to absorb specific prospective customers and has advantages such as increasing sales, reducing marketing costs, increasing trust and credibility, and reducing competition. It may also help estimate potential visitor numbers and appropriate price points for different customer groups. In this study, we will discuss one of the long-term trends that occur due the phenomenon of great demand for the Korean entertainment industry in the form of music, or what is called fangirling.

People who's doing fangirling called fangirl. (Fitriyani, 2016) defines fangirl as a group of girls who have a high dedication to their idol and even become obsessed with it. The idol can be a real person or a fictional character. But usually, fangirl are synonymous with lovers of public figure in entertainment such as actors, actress, music group, boy band, girl band or even athletes. Known as the biggest fandom in the world, BTS's fan group or ARMY has become a part of history because it contains millions of fangirls from various countries in the world, including Indonesia. Since they have interests in the same idol, ARMY as fangirls will tend to have similarities in terms of tastes in music genres, age, gender, lifestyles, et cetera. Related to marketing study, the people created by the trend and phenomenon in one typical segment can be said as a niche market in marketing strategies.

Niche markets consist of groups of consumers (market segments) within the larger marketplace who have similar demographic, buying behaviour, and/or lifestyle characteristics (Thilmany In Akbar, 2017). It operates in a small market but is not a small segment, in practice, this small market may be a segment where consumers have homogeneous behaviour or characteristics (Situmorang, 2017). According to Choudary (2014), niche marketing works with a concept of "big fish in small pond". Amubode in Akbar, F (2017) stated that focus on niche marketing is addressing a need for a product or services that is not being addressed or ignored by mainstream providers. From definitions of the niche market, means the views of the niche itself are different from one researcher to another. However, the niche market is related to segmentation, as many authors or researchers stated. It really depends on the point of view of everyone who discusses it.

As an example of implementation niche marketing in the fangirling phenomenon in Indonesia, ARMY Kuta Bali is using the fangirls segments to be the target of their

music event. They took advantage of the fangirls' enthusiasm for enjoying BTS' music by creating events to watch together or stream concerts which were held several times at several event venues. This strategy is expected to ensure that the audience receives all entertainment as expected and the event is suitable for ARMY as the audience. In general, the purpose of writing this article is to improve the ability to conduct research, especially research related to the niche market strategy by taking advantage from the current trend or phenomenon happened in society.

METHOD

The methodology used in writing this article is a qualitative descriptive method. The reason for using qualitative methods is so that the authors can know and understand the effectiveness of niche marketing in promoting event. Furthermore, the descriptive analysis in this study is intended to understand and dig deeper. Can niche strategy by using fangirling phenomenon help event industry to get more concept and audience. In this study, the primary data obtained by the researcher were: by interviewing the founder ARMY Kuta Bali who do and organize the event while secondary data (library studies) through journals, books, online media, official websites, and internet sources related to the problems to be researched.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Bangtan Sonyeondan (BTS) has succeeded in winning the hearts of music lovers with their "Love Yourself" and "Speak Yourself" campaign by voicing social issues through their music. BTS has even successfully launched a world tour that is always sold out in only few minutes and became the first Asian artist to win the Artist of the year award at the American Music Award. BTS is said to have contributed to the South Korean economy up to US\$5 billion or around Rp. 71 trillion (money.kompas.com, 2021). BTS was also asked to be the representative of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) moment of the decade of action in New York along with President Moon Jae-in at the White House.

On 9 July 2013, BTS officially formed an official fanbase by choosing the name ARMY as its name, ARMY stands for Adorable Representative MC for Youth. These fans, spread worldwide, often shock the media by making social actions such as raising funds to build schools, forest rehabilitation, and movements to help children with cancer. The social activities themselves carry out in the name of BTS members. ARMY is also said to be the most immense fandom in the world, overtaking Potterhead, namely fans of the Harry Potter series.

Army Kuta Bali and Special Events for Fangirls

At the beginning of 2021, many of the public felt restless due to not being able to do many activities as a result of the stress rate among the generation which incidentally was of productive age became unproductive due to the low social status during the pandemic according to (Henkens, J, et al., 2020) research found an increase in economic anxiety as a consequence of COVID-19, especially in younger individuals (Bareket-Bojmel et al., 2020), which may have impacted their perspectives on their futures negatively (Settersten et al., 2020).

Army Kuta Bali, was founded in 2021, to be precise in March by 8 ARMYs living in Bali who initially had a mission to help other ARMYs who wanted to enjoy BTS-related events at an easy-to-reach price. They come with the idea of forming a community

to provide a forum for fellow fans to self-heal through the BTS love yourself campaign, namely ARMY gathering. As a community, they have been working closely with event venues such as hotels and malls and several media partners. The gathering did not target number of visitor because the event's purpose was limited to gathering only. With several events that invite ARMYs in Bali to participate, the name of ARMY Kuta Bali has become increasingly known and trusted.

From 2021 to 2022, ARMY Kuta Bali successfully held a special event especially made for fangirls. Every time it takes place, the number of visitors to the event reaches 250 people. Some of the events created by this community are Sunday Fun BTS which is held for free, live streaming concert permission to dance 1 at Discovery Shopping Mall Kuta, Bali. Live streaming concert permission to dance 2 at Lippo Mall Kuta, Bali, then held again at Harris River View Bali and the last one is at Fashion Hotel Bali. This July, they will also have special exhibition held in Park23 Mall Kuta Bali with theme memory line to bringing up BTS's history during their career in music.

Niche Promotion by Army Kuta Bali

Tourism and the event business are almost entirely related to the public and many people. Special events for social (Mathew, 2015) targeting groups that can be in the form of small groups (friends), or large groups (international communities). Special events within social groups that have the same culture, hobbies, and goals are often held such as gatherings, community festivals, and reunions. ARMY Kuta Bali, engaged in special event organizing able to see opportunities to carry out its agenda "sharing happiness" even during a pandemic without ignoring health protocols.

In carrying out the program, ARMY Kuta Bali prefers to mention organizing the event as sharing happiness rather than a business. The founder also mentions that they are not profit-oriented but want to be able to share happiness with fellow fangirls, as mentioned on Mohd Jenol, et al. (2020) Investment a fan can make by fandom is by socialising and sharing, socialising creates bonds between fans when they converse and interact together either about the object of fandom or not.

During the event, the number of ticket buyers consistently exceeds the target; the average number is 250 people per event and has a large profit margin which is then kept to carry out free events for the army. The promotions carried out when marketing the event are also called not too difficult because they carry the name of BTS, which is an idol with the largest fandom, and brand ambassadors from well-known brands such as Hyundai, McDonalds, Samsung, Louis Vuitton, et cetera.

Demographically, the audience of the event held by ARMY Kuta Bali is female. However, what is unique is that in terms of age, it is very varied from children to adults. Most of the information is shared through social media and media partners. However, the easiest thing in selling tickets is because Fangirls have loyalty. K-Pop fans can be categorized as fans who have high loyalty to their idols; customer loyalty is one of the core goals pursued in several modern marketing models (Nugroho, 2017), they often become donors to give gifts such as albums and merchandise distributed at concerts or giveaways.

Fangirling as a Loyal Customer Model

ARMY Kuta Bali, as a fandom with indignation towards BTS proves that having an idol is not a negative thing. The image of fangirls is often accused of being excessive or not reasonable. In a interview with Mrs. Ani, the founder of ARMY Kuta Bali (fan club) mentioned "The purpose of forming this community is for ARMY, many of them

are loyal, such as coming to events continuously, being repeaters, and helping promote events we organize". Most of fangirls are loyal and support ARMY Kuta Bali in making events that are specifically made for BTS fandom because they feel happy to meet people with same interest with them. This also along with the result of reseach by Laffen, D. (2020), that mention the results of their study showed that higher K-Pop fanship levels significantly predicted increased levels of psychosocial outcomes (happiness, self-esteem and social connectedness).

Not only ARMY, according to research, there are also many fangirls from other fandoms who have strong and very loyal to the groups, fangirls have loyalty because the group their idol made them to be more creative, enthusiastic, and happy. Mrs. Ani added: "It is good to be fangirls not only to BTS but also others group, because they idolize someone that motivated to learn languages, such as Korean, Chinese, Japanese, and English since other group also member from other countries not only Korean".

CONCLUSION

The trend regarding fangirling is not only limited to BTS; the fact is that this phenomenon has been going on for a long time and as the leading industry of South Korea. The potential for the emergence of other groups with increasingly diverse personnel and themes will give birth to many other fandoms in the future. With the loyalty of the community that joins fangirls, the strategy of selling activities such as music events or exhibitions that carry the name of their idol will be more readily accepted and sold because of a particular market, often called a niche market.

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