

## **Fomo At The Blackpink Concert Causes Cyberbalkanization And Polarization Between Fans and Non-Fans**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study discusses the phenomenon of cyberbalkanization that arises from debates among Indonesian netizens regarding the Blackpink concert and the term "Fomo" used to describe the behavior of non-fans who attended the concert. It aims to highlight the importance of awareness of the phenomenon of cyberbalkanization and how it can affect the dynamics of interaction between groups on social media, especially in the context of cyberbullying, hate speech, and fragmentation of views among netizens who interact on these platforms. This is closely related to the research title, cyberbalkanization and polarization occurring between Blackpink fans and non-fans, caused by the "Fomo" phenomenon exhibited by many non-fans during the Blackpink concert in Jakarta. Both groups need to be aware of this because it can influence social media interaction dynamics. This study uses text analysis as a data collection method, involving seven informants who are fans and non-fans of Blackpink, and examines comments on social media about "Fomo" at Blackpink concerts. It also refers to previous literature related to cyberbalkanization, polarization on social media, and communication within the Blackpink fan community. This phenomenon has resulted in a polarization of views among netizens, dividing them into two camps with differing perspectives regarding the presence of non-fans at the concerts.*

**Keywords:** Polarization, Digital Culture, Cybernetics

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### **INTRODUCTION**

On March 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Blackpink held a concert called BORN PINK in Jakarta at Gelora Bung Karno Main Stadium (SUGBK). The concert started at 7:00 PM WIB on March 11th and at 6:30 PM WIB on March 12th. Many Indonesians were enthusiastic, making the event a topic of conversation among Indonesian netizens. In fact, many non-fans were interested in watching the concert to share in the euphoria. Several artists, such as Rachel Vennya and Audi Marissa, were also seen attending the Blackpink concert. This sparked debate among Indonesian netizens. On Twitter and Instagram, netizens referred to non-fans or people and artists who did not fully like Blackpink but attended the concert simply as "Fomo." The term emerged because they were considered to be following trends mainly for the benefit of their social media content. Comments about Fomo on social media were divided into two viewpoints. Some netizens believed this was their right and had no problem with Fomo, since there are no rules about who can attend Blackpink concerts (Apolo & Kurniawati, 2023; Novalika & Kartasasmita, 2022). Others commented that it should not happen because several social media videos showed audience members busy recording and not singing along, as they only knew the viral Blackpink songs.

These opposing views among netizens on social media created polarization, dividing netizens into two camps regarding those who Fomo towards Blackpink concerts. Each camp tends to see, read, and watch posts that support their views, sharing only what they like. Their social media information is filtered into groups featuring content they prefer, limiting exposure to opposing information. Those who accept Fomo reject and refute comments that criticize non-fans attending the concert. Conversely, those who question Fomo express distaste for non-fans, believing they ruin the atmosphere, which should be vibrant with Blackpink fans singing along.

Instagram remains a popular social media platform, especially among the Blackpink fan community. This is evident in previous research showing that most Blackpink fan communities use Instagram to communicate, interact, and obtain the latest information about Blackpink.

The researchers believe that these issues strongly evidence cyberbalkanization, highlighted by the rise of cyberbullying, hate speech on social media, and increasing fragmentation and polarization among netizens on these platforms. This significantly impacts the polarized environment in cyberspace, especially across social media, where netizens congregate spontaneously, leading to positive or negative comments without considering the consequences of inappropriate public remarks. The researcher reviewed state-of-the-art literature for reference in this journal, including works on Cyberbalkanization and community polarization on social media.

To strengthen the research foundation, various references were utilized. First, a 2020 study by Nuryanto and Femi titled "Utilizing Instagram as a Communication Medium for the K-pop Community (A Case Study of the K-pop BLINK Community on the @reaction\_blackpink account)" discussed Instagram's role in building communication among Blackpink fans through creating accounts seen as an efficient means of interaction. The study examined Instagram's characteristics and user targeting, showing that fans use Instagram to build public trust and attract attention via likes, comments, and shares (Oktaviani, 2020).

Second, a 2022 article by Dini Safitri and Oot Hotimah titled "ICHELSS: International Conference on Humanities, Education, Law, and Social Sciences" analyzed social media polarization through user profiles and ideological beliefs, noting buzzers' role in creating polarization to disseminate information. The study found polarization heavily influences community information and views, evident in societal self-development tied to posts (Safitri & Hotimah, 2022).

Third, a 2020 paper by L. Gehrig, E. Bachhuber, and R. Goychayev, "Evaluating Nuclear Security Implications of the Splinternet," examined national-level internet control manifesting globally as the splinternet. The paper analyzed this fragmentation, highlighting national efforts to enhance security, privacy, and cultural-political control by isolating citizens from disruptive content. The study forecasted a nationally managed, fragmented internet split by geopolitical boundaries with mixed positive and negative effects (Gehrig et al., 2020).

Synthesizing the findings from these studies, researchers conclude that social media platforms like Instagram play a crucial role in fan communication and interaction, as with the Blackpink fan community. However, such use can lead to polarization, affecting community information and views by shaping users' behavior and beliefs.

This research is cutting-edge as it identifies specific gaps, particularly analyzing social media contexts of FOMO related to the Blackpink concert and its link to cyberbalkanization.

These contexts include open forums of Indonesian netizens and comments on posts by Indonesian Instagram celebrities who joined the concert excitement in Jakarta.

Moreover, this study discusses FOMO linked to the Blackpink concert, a popular topic among Indonesian netizens. The researchers connect it to cyberbalkanization, a previously underexplored area. The research draws on data from both Blackpink fans and non-fans, offering diverse perspectives on how FOMO around Blackpink concerts influences various social segments. This broadens the understanding of the phenomenon in entertainment-related digital behavior.

The urgency lies in the increasing digital polarization around Indonesian entertainment phenomena, where social media debates escalate into harmful cyber behaviors like doxxing, coordinated harassment, and hate speech. The Blackpink concert case exemplifies wider digital fragmentation that threatens social cohesion in Indonesian cyberspace.

Previous research on cyberbalkanization mainly focused on political contexts (Chang, 2008; Williams, 2007), with little attention to entertainment-driven polarization. Studies by Oktaviani (2020) explored K-pop fan communication, and Safitri and Hotimah (2022) analyzed general social media polarization, but none examined how FOMO at celebrity events fuels cyberbalkanization. Research on fan culture polarization remains fragmented, lacking focus on the intersection of consumer behavior, social identity, and digital tribalism in Indonesia.

This study fills a major gap by providing the first comprehensive analysis of entertainment-driven cyberbalkanization in Indonesia, focusing on how FOMO behavior generates digital polarization. Its novelty lies in linking the individual psychological phenomenon of FOMO with collective digital behavior, shedding light on the intersection of consumer culture and digital fragmentation.

Therefore, this research aims to: (1) analyze how FOMO at the Blackpink concert created cyberbalkanization between fans and non-fans; (2) examine social media platforms' roles in facilitating or amplifying polarization in entertainment contexts; and (3) identify patterns of information consumption and interaction in cyberbalkanized communities. The research contributes to digital sociology, informs social media design for healthier discourse, and guides the entertainment industry in managing fan controversies.

## **METHOD**

The data collection method involved text analysis of informant responses about FOMO at the Blackpink concert, as well as netizen comments on social media platforms like Instagram and Twitter. This approach was used to understand the prevalence of FOMO in this context.

Researchers conducted in-depth interviews with seven Blackpink fans to evaluate the influence of cyberbalkanization and polarization between fans and non-fans from their perspectives. These interviews supported mapping and describing the research flow.

Seven Blackpink fans and non-fans served as primary data sources. Text analysis was applied to their responses and relevant social media comments regarding FOMO at the Blackpink concert. This analysis explored the attitudes and perceptions of both fans and non-fans about FOMO at the Jakarta concert.

Secondary text data was collected from Twitter and Instagram related to groupings and debates between Blackpink fans and non-fans that emerged due to the concert. Supporting data

included a focused selection of comments from Indonesian netizens relevant to the research topic.

The seven informants were recruited through purposive sampling, selecting individuals who met predetermined criteria directly related to the research problem. They were chosen because they understood the feelings of fans and non-fans concerning views on cyberbalkanization circulating on social media. The collected data was analyzed and presented based on the most significant points raised by these informants.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Blackpink, a South Korean K-Pop group, recently held their concert in Jakarta, titled BORN PINK in Jakarta. The highly anticipated event, held at Gelora Bung Karno Main Stadium (SUGBK), was deemed a success. The concert helped satisfy the longing of Blackpink fans in Indonesia. Many non-fans and celebrities also attended to experience the excitement.

Many Blackpink fans were disappointed by the concert's outcome. This was especially true for non-fans and the artists who attended the concert, many of whom were unfamiliar with Blackpink and their songs, leading to the widespread discussion of "Fomo" on Twitter. The main reason "Fomo" was so widely discussed was the numerous unexpected events that K-Pop fans typically experience during concerts. The account @elfvido sparked the conversation by posting the following tweet:



Figure 1. Netizens open a question forum on Twitter  
(Eve, Maret 03, 2023 [08:39 a.m.], diakses pada 25 Februari 2023,  
<https://twitter.com/elfvido/status/1634730808757092353>)

A comment from the account @elfvido asked about the difference between K-Pop fans who experience FOMO and those who don't. He posed this question on his Twitter account to get a clear answer to the currently hotly debated issue.

This question indirectly sparked a divide among Indonesian netizens, who were divided into two camps. Some comments were dismissive of the FOMO issue surrounding Blackpink concerts, while others argued that FOMO could disrupt the enjoyment of the concerts. In response, netizens explained the difference between K-Pop fans who experience FOMO and those who don't, which ultimately sparked debate among K-Pop fans, Blackpink fans, and non-fans on social media. This has the potential to create cyberbalkanization.



Figure 2. Netizens feeling frustrated with people experiencing FOMO (Nav, Maret 15, 2023 [3:06 a.m.], accessed on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023, <https://twitter.com/reveuseisme/status/1635915255732928513>)

Here are two Indonesian artists who attended the Blackpink concert: Audi Marissa and Rachel Vennya. In a post on Audi's Instagram account, she shared a video of herself singing along to one of Blackpink's songs.



Figure 3. Audi Marissa and Rachel Vennya attending the Blackpink concert in Jakarta (Audi, Maret 13, 2023 [10:08 a.m.], accessed on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023, [https://www.instagram.com/p/CptqUgKkyus5/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/p/CptqUgKkyus5/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link) (Rachel, Maret 12, 2023 [03:26 p.m.], accessed on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023, [https://www.instagram.com/p/Cprp9mtL9rG/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/p/Cprp9mtL9rG/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link))

The post included a caption explaining that she was the only one in the area around her seat singing along and knowing the song. The video shows that most of the people sitting in the VIP seats were busy recording Blackpink's performance. This drew various comments from Blackpink fans, who expressed their disappointment and sadness at the audience members who were busy recording without knowing what song was being played, calling it "Fomo." Others refuted this by explaining that fans should be grateful that Blackpink's concert tickets were sold out. Still others refuted this by stating that even if only Blackpink fans had bought tickets, tickets would still have sold out.

Next, another Instagram celebrity who attended the Blackpink concert was Rachel Vennya. In a post on her Instagram account, Rachel was seen enjoying the excitement of the Blackpink concert with her friends.

The post mostly received comments stating that Rachel was just "Fomo." This was because many netizens assumed she wasn't a true Blackpink fan and was simply following the latest Blackpink concert trend. This can be seen from the comments on the post, which stated that Rachel Vennya was experiencing Fomo, as follows:

"Rachel is Fomo, huh? I feel like she's unfamiliar with the idol world," said the account @rey\*\*\*alkaf\_. The comment stated that netizens had always known Rachel was unfamiliar with the K-pop world. However, when there was a Blackpink concert that was widely discussed by Indonesian netizens and greeted with great enthusiasm, Rachel attended the concert. Therefore, she was called "Fomo" by some Indonesian netizens. Furthermore, Rachel was considered merely Fomo because, as many people knew, she had never shown any interest in the idol world or K-pop.

Meanwhile, many non-Blackpink fans defended Rachel Vennya by replying to the unpleasant comments. One such comment read:

"Those who hate the comments are mostly Blinks who don't have the money to go to concerts hahahahaha, and whose rule requires that only Blinks can attend concerts????" @xv\*\*\*x14\_ The comment appeared to defend Rachel, who had received criticism from a number of netizens. The account owner felt that everyone had the right to attend Blackpink concerts, and that non-fans were not prohibited from attending. As long as they could afford tickets, they could attend, even if they weren't fans. He stated that the people or netizens who made negative comments about Rachel were simply fans who couldn't afford Blackpink concert tickets, and he envied non-fans who were able to attend Blackpink concerts, like Rachel. Both fans and non-fans had the right to attend Blackpink concerts as long as they had tickets.

Netizens believe that these diehard fans, who were unable to attend the Blackpink concert, are venting their disappointment, anger, and frustration on others, especially non-fans like Rachel, who were able to attend the concert. They cannot accept the fact that many non-fans were able to attend the concert.

It's also evident from the comments that she is one of the non-Blackpink fans who defended Rachel Vennya, claiming that Blink (the nickname for Blackpink fans) who created the "FOMO" commotion were deemed to have created a rule prohibiting non-K-pop fans from attending Blackpink concerts. This is evident in how fans who don't accept "FOMO" responded to non-fans who attended the concert.

Differences of opinion on Indonesian social media often manifest in polarization. This can be seen in the debates between Blackpink fans and non-fans regarding the audience. Blackpink fans tend to express their dislike of people and artists who aren't true Blackpink fans and only attend concerts for social media content or simply to follow trends (Fomo). Meanwhile, non-fans believe there's no rule prohibiting non-fans from attending Blackpink concerts and view the issue as insignificant.

These two camps are at odds with each other and find it difficult to accept comments that differ from their own. This can be called cyberbalkanization, a phenomenon where society is divided into opposing groups and struggles to communicate effectively due to strong differences in opinion.

As previously discussed, comments from Blackpink fans and non-fans demonstrate, cyberbalkanization can be seen in how each camp holds a distinct perspective and believes its view is correct and refuses to accept information or opinions that contradict it. They prefer information spaces on social media and only interact with those who share their views.

Next, the researchers interviewed seven informants, both Blackpink fans and non-fans. We can analyze this by linking cyberbalkanization, polarization, and FOMO as experienced by the two informants. The researchers proved that these influences affected all seven informants.

Cyberbalkanization occurs when like-minded individuals communicate and build strong relationships (Software & Barlow, 2021). Recent studies have shown that social media brings like-minded individuals together, but it doesn't always create shared understanding, resulting in weaker relationships (Chang, 2008).

Cyberbalkanization and polarization are increasingly visible in various aspects of life, including entertainment, such as Blackpink concerts. This phenomenon is creating a polarization between fans and non-fans, which can lead to feelings of FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) for those who don't follow the trend.

Cyberbalkanization makes it difficult for individuals to share experiences across different groups, including Blackpink fans and non-fans. This loss is felt by all parties (Mangan & Gillies, 2022), but especially by those who may feel marginalized or isolated from the outside world because of this trend.

In this context, it is crucial for electronic technology to not only serve as a means of storing information, but also to leverage memory to provide more inclusive feedback and connect fans and non-fans (Muschert & Reppas, 2019).

In the era of a fragmented internet, companies and governments must recognize that they will not thrive by limiting themselves to local markets (Muschert & Reppas, 2019). Therefore, they have begun to utilize social media to expand their reach and reduce polarization between fans and non-fans at events like Blackpink concerts.

This poses risks that have been mitigated to some extent by the global nature of internet businesses. The worst thing researchers have ever seen about the breakup of the internet is that they think the way we are losing the internet parallels the way we are losing the project of globalization. The breakup of the internet reflects that decline from globalization, but it may also make it more difficult to undo.

Intuitions regarding the issue of disagreements between fans and non-fans vary widely, and this naturally leads to differing views on the issue of self-knowledge, including:

1. Implicit cognitive events or automatic self-awareness. Simultaneous awareness that the differences fans perceive regarding their idols significantly impact their lives and awareness of their occurrence. In contrast, non-fans believe that there is nothing special about K-pop artists that impacts their lives.
2. Awareness of cognitive events occurs through subsequent additional cognition, most often identified as "inward" perception.
3. Cognitive events become examples of self-knowledge only when taken inferentially in "reflection."

Knowing that fans admire idols after subconsciously understanding their idols' lives will support their argument by proving their search for information on social media, citing self-reflection. In contrast, non-fans will understand before searching for information that they dislike K-pop artists for various reasons. Social media has become a new medium used to share information, experiences, and foster communication between fans online (Wipti Aga Pramasepta, Christina Rochayanti, 2020).

Comments circulating on social media serve to monitor the social system. There are ways to comment freely and unrestrictedly on social media, namely through communicative interactions and new ways of communicating face-to-face using new media (Rosy Febriani Daud, 2019).

Social media companies (Atsilah et al., 2018) provide features and guidelines regarding bullying on social media. They can limit who can comment, view posts, or report abusive behavior. The appropriate action is to block the account to maintain online safety.

How to resolve the cyberbalkanization between fanatic K-pop fans and non-fans.

1. Interact online by refraining from voicing criticism of one's own thoughts when posting comments publicly. It's best to express your opinions directly to the intended recipient by sending a message via the direct message feature.
2. The same standards of behavior should be applied online as in person, prioritizing ethics and applicable laws.
3. Consider the position in the world of cyberbalkanization, where ethics and regulations differ across platforms. Learn the characteristics and adapt to the circumstances and topics.
4. Avoid digital battles; be wise as a good netizen who is responsible for information that is clearly true.
5. Reduce arbitrary power that leads to dominance, causing discomfort for non-fans.

Social media influences the process of polarization by observing the defense of true fans versus non-fans. This can be proven by the use of social media in Indonesia, where people post comments without filtering themselves, pretending to be right, and this is reinforced by discussions about the opinions of both fans and non-fans on social media platforms. Furthermore, the formation of K-pop fan group identities can also be seen.

However, this cyberbalkanization phenomenon actually has a significant negative impact on society. When we maintain our own views without listening to or respecting those of others, we will struggle to reach agreements and build good relationships with others. This can exacerbate polarization in society and make it increasingly difficult to achieve unity.

The impact of cyberbalkanization is influenced by the situation. All of the negative impacts that occur on the promotion of digital literacy are caused by a lack of knowledge about how to use, exploit, and review all forms of information at your fingertips. Therefore, the solution here is a digital culture that goes beyond simple appeals to become a progressive, systematic, and massive capacity that can produce organic intellectuals in the field of cybernetics (Williams, 2007).

One of the triggering factors for cyberbalkanization among K-pop fans is fanaticism toward their favorite idols. K-pop fan fanaticism indirectly shapes their mindset, identity, and social media habits. They believe that what they like and believe in is the most correct. These fans will do anything to protect their idols from non-fans, who often find fault with them and make negative comments about them. They cannot stand it if their favorite idols are bullied. This is the case with Blackpink fans against non-fans. The fans' defense of their favorite idols ultimately leads to arguments between fans and non-fans, with hate speech being exchanged. Each of them holds fast to their beliefs, limiting their access to social media to information that aligns with their own way of thinking. This creates two opposing camps, fans and non-fans (V.A.R. Barao et al., 2022).



The solution to preventing polarization and conflict within the K-Pop fan community is to use social media wisely. Fans must also control their emotions and not be easily influenced by anything offensive about their favorite K-Pop idols. It's better to verify the source of information circulating among K-pop fans and be more open to information on social media. Some of the things that spark debate are simply provocations from fake accounts seeking to create unrest among both fans and non-fans.

The polarization of Korea is evident in the fact that people from other countries have encountered Koreans through K-pop, which is very hectic in every country, leading to a familiarity with Korea, which has spread to small groups.

The differences in opinion surrounding the Blackpink concert in Jakarta became a trending topic among the public. These differences can be seen from the perspectives of fans and non-fans, whether they attended the concert or simply participated in the excitement online.

## CONCLUSION

The Blackpink concert in Jakarta on March 11 and 12, 2023, received great enthusiasm, but the issue of "FOMO" (Fear of Missing Out) became a topic of debate on social media platforms like Twitter and Instagram. Polarization emerged between Blackpink fans and non-fans, as seen in Audi Marissa and Rachel Venny's posts about the concert. This difference of opinion created cyberbalkanization, where both sides argued against each other and believed their views were correct. Interviews with seven informants—four fans and three non-fans—revealed that they did not particularly mind "FOMO" at the Blackpink concert. However, they still expressed regret at the negative and detrimental behavior of "FOMO" during the concert. Cyberbalkanization makes it difficult for individuals to share experiences between different groups, such as Blackpink fans and non-fans, and exacerbates polarization and creates division. Solutions to this problem include being wise in using social media and controlling emotions while using social media to avoid getting caught up in negative debates and divisions. Future research should explore the long-term effects of entertainment-driven cyberbalkanization on social cohesion, investigate the role of platform algorithms in amplifying polarization, and develop intervention strategies for promoting healthier fan discourse. Additionally, comparative studies across different cultural contexts and entertainment genres could provide broader insights into digital fragmentation patterns in contemporary society. In this way, interactions on social media are not limited to the views of each faction, and divisions can be minimized.

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