

# The intensity of Parasocial Interaction of Student Watching Korean Drama During Stay at Home During Pandemic

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## Abstract

The spread of the Covid-19 pandemic has made most people work and do more activities at home. While staying at home is not only related to work from home, but also filled with entertainment-seeking activities, one of which is watching Korean dramas, this is a question whether it is related to the intensity of parasocial interactions. This research is intended to describe the intensity of parasocial interactions by students in watching Korean dramas while staying at home during the pandemic, with studies at various universities in the city of Banjarmasin. The research approach is quantitative with descriptive survey type research, through taking random sampling, from the results of data collection that is carried out online through social media that are distributed, it is obtained, 108 respondents. The data collection instrument used a questionnaire, the data analysis technique used a descriptive statistical test. The results showed that the respondents 78% are active viewers of Korean dramas. The average intensity of parasocial interactions per item falls into the 'agree' category (75%), which means that the intensity of parasocial interactions is high during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is proven by the statement that believes the favorite artist understands what is felt by 82%, with the category 'strongly agree.'

**Keywords:** The Covid-19 pandemic, Korean dramas, parasocial interactions.

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is the largest internet user country in the world, in Oik Yusuf's report (2014, November 24) as quoted by the market research institute e-Marketer, Indonesia's netter population reached 83.7 million people in 2014. The figures that apply to everyone who accesses the internet are at least once a month, Indonesia ranks 6th in the world in terms of the number of internet users. However, according to Agus Tri Haryanto (2020, 20 February), he stated that based on the latest We Are Social report, in 2020 it was stated that there were 175.4 million internet users in Indonesia. Compared to the previous year, there was an increase of 17% or 25 million internet users in this country. Based on Indonesia's total population of 272.1 million, this means that 64% of Indonesia's population has experienced access to cyberspace.

Percentage of internet users aged 16 to 64 who own each type of device, including mobile phones (96%), smartphones (94%), non-smartphone mobile phones (21%), laptops or desktop computers (66%), tables (23%), game consoles (16%), to virtual reality devices (5.1%).

Still, in this report, it is also known that currently there are 338.2 million Indonesians with cell phones. Likewise, data that is no less interesting, there are 160 million active users of social media. When compared to 2019, this year We Are Social found an increase of 10 million Indonesians who are active on social media. As for the social media that most Indonesian internet users 'hang out' on, from the very top are YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Line, FB Messenger, LinkedIn,

Pinterest, We Chat, Snapchat, Skype, Tik Tok, Tumblr, Reddit, Sina Weibo.

During 2019, as reported by kumparan.com (2020, 21 February) internet users in Indonesia aged 16 to 64 years have an average of 7 hours 59 minutes per day to surf in cyberspace. This figure exceeds the global average of only 6 hours 43 minutes on the internet per day. When chatting Indonesians with the internet, it brought Indonesia into the list of the top 10 countries addicted to the internet. Indonesia occupies the position of eight in the list of countries spending the longest time surfing the internet. This achievement actually 'decreased' compared to last year, which at that time Indonesia was ranked fifth. Indonesia also has other achievements in the number of social media users. Still from the same research, The number of social media users in Indonesia has reached 160 million, an increase of 8.1 percent or 12 million users compared to last year. That way, the penetration of social media use in Indonesia has reached 59 percent of the total population. The average use of social media in Indonesia reaches 3 hours 26 minutes per day. This figure is also above the global average of 2 hours 24 minutes per day. Another unique data, the average Indonesian population has about 10 social media accounts per person, both active and inactive using them. Meanwhile, 65 percent of social media users in Indonesia use the platform for work. The average use of social media in Indonesia reaches 3 hours 26 minutes per day. This figure is also above the global average of 2 hours 24 minutes per day. Other unique data, the average Indonesian population has around 10 social media accounts per person, both active and inactive using them. Meanwhile, 65 percent of social media users in Indonesia use the platform for work. The average use of social media in Indonesia reaches 3 hours 26 minutes per day. This figure is also above the global average of 2 hours 24 minutes per day. Other unique data, the average Indonesian population has around 10 social media accounts per person, both active and inactive using them. Meanwhile, 65 percent of social media users in Indonesia use the platform for work.

An interesting fact that can be explored is the duration of Indonesian citizens accessing the internet which reaches 3 hours 26 minutes per day. Of course, the next question is what kind of access do they have? Reported by Taufik Fajar

(2019, 5 March), citing Nielsen's study in 2018 shows that although the duration of watching TV is still the highest, which is an average of 4 hours 53 minutes per day, the duration of accessing the Internet is the second highest, which is an average of 3 hours 14 minutes per day; followed by listening to the radio (2 hours 11 minutes), reading newspapers (31 minutes) and reading magazines (24 minutes). This data shows that the duration of TV viewers is still the highest, with Digital Content Ratings, we can also find out the details of the audience profile for Niew Huajai Sut Glai Peun (The Spirit Of the Ruler) episode 1. The viewers who only watch on TV are 58 percent women, 28% of the viewers are over 50 years old and the viewing duration is 55 minutes. People who watch via Online Live are 56 percent women, 45% of the viewers are 21-34 years old with a viewing duration of 31 minutes. Meanwhile, more than half (53%) who watch online (Video on Demand) are viewers aged 21-34 years with a viewing duration of 12 minutes.

During the pandemic, which required most Indonesians to stay at home, the consumption of online viewing increased dramatically. Online viewing that is the choice of Indonesian people is television drama watching, one of which is Korean drama, because it is considered to be popular culture since 2002, formally through broadcasts on private television, and in 2010 it developed rapidly through streaming networks (see Velda Ardia, 2014; Idola Pardini Putri, Farah Dhiba Putri Liany, & Reni Nuraeni, 2019). According to the research results of Syarfina Mahya Nadila, Ranny Rastati, Annisa Meutia Ratri, & Wahyudi Akmaliah (2020), both before and during the pandemic, there was a large increase such as the series 'The World of the Married', 'Crash Landing on You', and 'Hospital Playlist'. In terms of the frequency of consumption there are also some important findings, 41.3% of respondents watch K-Drama more than 6 times a week. Also, there are differences in the duration of watching K-Drama before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. This difference lies in the average duration of watching K-Drama. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, our respondents watched on average about 2.7 hours per day. Meanwhile, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the average viewing time increased to 4.6 hours per day, so the consumption of leisure time becomes important during times of crisis. Our respondents' viewing

time is approximately 2.7 hours per day. Meanwhile, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the average viewing time increased to 4.6 hours per day, so the consumption of leisure time becomes important during times of crisis. Our respondents' viewing time is approximately 2.7 hours per day. Meanwhile, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the average viewing time increased to 4.6 hours per day, so the consumption of leisure time becomes important during times of crisis.

One of the series that the audience has been waiting for is 'The World of the Married,' which reportedly even reached the highest rating in South Korean television history (Ranny Rastati, 2020). Many loyal viewers of this series are so sympathetic to the photogenic actors and hate the antagonist actors, so they often express hatred on social media for the antagonist actors of the series so they feel uncomfortable and disturbed (eg Anonymous, 2020, 20 August; Nunung Nasikhah, 2020, 18 May). The relationship that exists between the audience and the actors in the series is of course a relationship that doesn't make sense, just because the audience is so immersed in the plot of the series.

This study is intended to examine the extent to which students watch Korean dramas when they are advised to stay at home during the pandemic because most students are generation Z who are accustomed to online viewing (Duffett, 2020). Parasocial has a lot of impact on the younger generation in the form of illusory effects when watching, experiencing something that is not there but feels there and the effect of emotional bias, when people immerse emotions into relationships with media figures and start to think of them as real people (even though they are not. ) and, consequently, because of emotions, the effects of these personal concepts change, which change behavior when existing parasocial relationships change individual behavior patterns and add new ones (fan part creativity effect, consumer behavior,

Jarzyna (2020) revealed that the recommendation to stay at home during the Covid-19 pandemic, quarantine greatly limits the real socialization process. Those living alone have e-mail and video calls to support them, but there is almost no physical contact if they comply with quarantine rules. During this time, people seemed to be relying on social media and streaming serials to give themselves a feeling of

being connected to others more than ever, which formed a parasocial character. Students are the generation who is most active in accessing the internet concerning communication, entertainment, and education (eg Dona Syafrina, Dian Putri Permatasari, & Yuliezar Perwira Dara, 2016; Zunaira Zafar, Farahat Ali, Muhammad Awais, & Muzammil Saeed, 2020).

## Literature Review

### Parasocial Interaction in Korean Drama

Parasocial interaction is the response that a person gives to a media figure on television as if the media figure exists in the room where he is (see Stever, 2010; Sherman-Morris, 2006). The occurrence of parasocial interactions is caused by several reasons, namely: (1) task attraction, namely showing attraction based on the talents and abilities of celebrities; (2) identification attraction shows the desire to become like celebrities, developing also the thought that celebrities are like themselves; and (3) romantic attraction, which shows interest based on physical appearance or the potential to become a partner. It refers to being in a relationship (dating), getting married, having physical relations. Of the three causes of these parasocial interactions,

However, according to the findings of Wika Bia Adita & Rosmawati (2018) on Korean drama viewers, age shows that not all loyal Korean drama viewers do not become parasocial interactions, the behavior displayed includes thinking about watching fun things, undertaking challenges given by friends in watching Korean dramas, watching while sleeping, it is important to know the ending quickly, want to watch again and restless if not watching Korean dramas. The results of this study are different from the findings obtained by Fauziyah Auliya & Siti Qodariah (2018) in adult women showing a high category of parasocial interactions, especially in the aspect of task attraction. Romantic attraction in Indonesian society has different critical proportions of culture and male figures that are displayed in Korean drama shows because when they encounter similar cultural content, such as being friendly, polite, and hardworking, the audience is predominantly hegemonic. But when finding the cultural content of drinking liquor in Korea, society is divided into negotiated reading and oppositional reading (eg

Maria Erniyanti Kedi, 2013; Amy Nur Islamiyati, 2017).

Of course, parasocial interactions are different from social interactions, but often parasocial interactions develop into the illusion of personal interactions (see Edward Schiappa, Peter B. Gregg & Dean E. Hewes, 2005; Kurtin, O'Brien, Roy, & Dam, 2018). This is recognized by Horton and Wohl (Katrine Kavli, 2012) that the relationship between parasocial interactions is an illusion of personal interaction because: (1) it becomes one-sided, especially the relationship is carried out and maintained indirectly by the figures being watched. The passive audience, but accepting parasocial relationships; (2) are not prone to joint development, as the audience cannot just change the parasocial interaction in participating. If the audience is dissatisfied with the parasocial relationship he can only withdraw from it; (3) consists of the audience and persona controlled by the figures being watched; and finally, (4) being nondialectic in the sense that the audience accepts personas and parasocial relationships and interactions without examining competing ideas, perspectives or arguments related to personas and relationships.

#### Stay Home During a Pandemic

The emergence of the Covid-19 virus in Indonesia affects the activities of most students who have to stay at home to prevent widespread transmission of the virus, students who originally carried out free activities outside the home are now inversely proportional to that they have to move indoors while studying face-to-face virtual education through educators in educational institutions (Tabi'in, 2020). Staying at home unless there are things that cannot be avoided is a preventive step that can now be done, one way that can be done to balance mentally at home is an effort to maintain psychological calm so that you can think positively, online entertainment seeking activities can be seen as an effort to improve self-calmness (Dana Riksa Buana, 2020). It can be said that staying at home can reduce the rate of Covid-19 infection (Castillo, Staguin, & Weston-Farber, 2020). But on the other hand, the policy to keep asking people to stay at home increases financing and has an impact on mental health vulnerabilities (Fowler, Hill, Levin, & Obradovich, 2020). From a positive perspective, family dynamics when staying at home provide positive parent-child relationships, increase

parenting cohesion, and increase the quality time (Rushing, & Powell, 2015).

#### Significant Theory

This research is important to do to describe the intensity of parasocial interactions when watching Korean dramas while staying at home, with questions emphasizing the size or not. The population taken is the students at various state universities in the city of Banjarmasin. The instrument used is in the form of a closed questionnaire which represents the intensity variable of parasocial interactions when watching Korean dramas while staying at home regarding the views of Bocarnea & Brown (2007) and Deshinta Firstiana Sari (2015).

### Research Methodology

#### Research design

The researcher used a descriptive survey research design to collect a representative sample of the student population that reached all universities both public and private in the city of Banjarmasin who were taken randomly.

#### Population and Sample Research

The population in this study were all students at both public and private universities in the city of Banjarmasin who were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. For sampling using a random sampling technique. Taking random sampling is done randomly so that the respondents who are obtained are respondents who fill in the instrument so that 108 students are obtained as samples.

#### Data Collection Instruments

The study used two instruments that have been compiled based on the Celebrity-Persona Parasocial Interaction Scale instrument compiled by Bocarnea & Brown (2007) which consists of 20 statement items and instruments compiled by Deshinta Firstiana Sari (2015) in examining motives for watching Korean dramas on television by teenagers from Surabaya. The two instruments are combined and divided into 2 (two) parts, namely the first part is a basic choice statement which describes watching 'Korean drama' which consists of 4 (four) statement items that have various choices, then in the second part is the core statement in the

form of an interaction instrument parasocial consists of 20 statement items. This instrument is presented with a point scale for the answer choices, namely: 1 = "Strongly Agree," 2 = "Agree," 3 = "Disagree," 4 = "Strongly Disagree." This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey research type, to describe respondents in the intensity of their parasocial interactions in watching Korean dramas while staying at home during the Covid-19 pandemic.

#### Data Retrieval Procedure

The distribution of the two questionnaires was given randomly to students in the city of Banjarmasin at each university, both public and private. The distribution of the questionnaire is shared online through serial shares from social media groups, which are entrusted from one sample to another. The distribution of the questionnaire online uses the google form application. Considering that it is not possible to share directly in pandemic conditions like this, the distribution of instruments is limited to 3 (three) months from August to November 2020. From the population in question, samples were collected.

#### Data analysis method

The data analysis technique used percentage statistical analysis, with descriptive analysis facilitated using the Microsoft Excel 2016 program and the 2020 version of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

### Presentation of Results

#### Results of Fundamental Questions

The results of basic questions to answer basic questions about watching Korean dramas while staying at home are shown in the following table.

Table 1. *Watching Korean Dramas during Stay at Home*

No.	Question	Respondents	Percentage (%)
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Table 2. *Parasocial Interactions that Occur*

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	N	Score	Mean	TCR	Category
1	Watching my favorite artists is like being with good friends	27	45	25	11	108	304	2.81	70%	Agree

1.	Are you a Korean drama audience?	Yes	84	78%
		Not	24	22%
2.	How regularly do you watch Korean dramas while staying at home?	Watch regularly every day	15	14%
		You don't have to watch regularly	93	86%
3.	The number of Korean drama titles that you watch while staying at home?	Only 1 Korean drama title	73	32%
		More than 1 Korean drama title	35	68%
4.	The Korean drama genre that you often watch while staying at home?	Romance	40	37%
		Family	9	8%
		Action	16	15%
		Comedy	17	16%
		Etc	26	24%

#### Results of Parasocial Interaction Statement

The following table presents an overview of parasocial interactions when watching Korean dramas.

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	N	Score	Mean	TCR	Category
2	When the favorite artist appears I watch the show.	29	44	26	9	108	309	2.86	72%	Agree
3	I see my favorite artist as a friendly person.	29	58	14	7	108	325	3.01	75%	Agree
4	If the media talks about my favorite artist, I will read it.	29	49	22	8	108	315	2.92	73%	Agree
5	I want to meet my favorite artist in person.	52	23	20	13	108	330	3.06	76%	Agree
6	I feel like I have an understanding of the emotions the artist is experiencing.	23	44	26	15	108	291	2.69	67%	Agree
7	I think of the artist regularly.	5	14	49	40	108	200	1.85	46%	Disagree
8	I don't have any feelings about my favorite artist.	24	32	34	18	108	262	2.43	61%	Agree
9	I love watching these artists appear on television.	22	37	31	18	108	279	2.58	65%	Agree
10	I didn't get any information about the artist for a day, so I felt a loss.	6	6	22	74	108	160	1.48	37%	Disagree
11	Finding information about the artist is important to me.	11	27	37	33	108	232	2.15	54%	Agree
12	I made friends on the artist's social media account in particular.	10	40	36	22	108	254	2.35	59%	Agree
13	I searched the internet in depth for more information about the artist.	10	37	38	23	108	250	2.31	58%	Agree
14	I want to communicate with the artist directly.	36	37	19	16	108	309	2.86	72%	Agree
15	My favorite artist understands how I feel.	5	10	41	52	108	356	3.30	82%	Strongly agree
16	I sometimes comment on the artist's social media accounts.	17	23	29	39	108	234	2.17	54%	Agree
17	I am well aware of the details of my favorite artist's life.	2	14	41	51	108	183	1.69	42%	Disagree
18	I understand the personal life of that favorite artist.	5	21	31	51	108	196	1.81	45%	Disagree
19	I hope to see my favorite artist on television or live online media.	40	41	15	12	108	325	3.01	75%	Agree
20	I'm not really interested in my favorite artists.	14	23	36	35	108	308	2.85	71%	Agree
<b>Total</b>		396	625	592	547					
<b>Mean</b>		19.8	31.3	29.6	27.4					
<b>Maximum</b>		52	58	49	74					
<b>Minimum</b>		2	6	14	7					
<b>Standard Deviation</b>		13.61	14.2	9.43	18.7					

Based on the table above, it is also necessary to analyze the categorical statements per item to obtain a complete picture of the statistical

intensity of parasocial interactions, which is determined based on category scaling.

Table 3. *Scale Per Item*

Scale Per Item	Score	Percentage
Strongly Agree with a scale of 1	327- 432	78 - 100
Agree on a scale of 2	218 - 326	52- 77
Disagree with scale 3	109 - 217	26 - 51
Strongly disagree with a scale of 4	0 - 108	0 - 25

From table 3, it is necessary to specify the categories of parasocial interactions that occur in each item, so it is obtained as shown in the following table.

Table 4. *Based on Per Item Question*

	Category	Respondents	
		F	Percentage
The intensity of Student Parasocial Interaction Due to Watching Korean Drama During Stay At Home	Strongly agree	1	5%
	Agree	15	75%
	Disagree	4	20%
	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
	<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

The results of descriptive statistical analysis of the intensity of parasocial interactions are presented in the following table.

Table 5. *Descriptive Statistics of Parasocial Interactions*

Variable	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistics	Statistics	Statistics	Statistics	Statistics	Std. Error	Statistics
Parasocial Interaction	20	196	160	356	271.10	12,430	55,591
Valid N (listwise)	20						

Researchers distributed random data collection instruments to students who were respondents in the city of Banjarmasin, Indonesia, and obtained as many as 108 students who were spread from various universities, from the public to private universities. The results obtained show that 78% of respondents admitted to watching Korean dramas while staying at home when it occurred during the pandemic. However, they admit that they do not watch regularly and regularly (86%). The titles of Korean dramas they watch vary (68%), although most of them watch dramas with the romance genre by 37%. Not least, they said that the genres they watched were varied or mixed genres, namely as much as 24%.

Based on this description, will this affect the intensity of their parasocial interactions during this pandemic, when most people stay at home? In general, based on the average per item, it falls into the 'agree' category (75%). This proves that the intensity of large parasocial interactions with Korean drama actors and actresses, even respondents gave information to researchers, that they believe favorite actors and artists understand what they feel, one of the statement

items with a large choice level of 82%. Other characteristics of the intensity of parasocial interactions that the researchers found were as follows: (1) watching a favorite actor/actress like being with a good friend; (2) if the favorite actor/artist performs difficult to be watched; (3) feel that he is a friendly person; (4) if the media talks about it, then it is listened to and followed by its development; (4) the growing desire to meet him in person; (5) have an understanding of the emotions they experience; (6) finding information about it is important; (7) Therefore, it is important to make friends and comment on his social media accounts; (8) there is a strong desire to communicate directly; and, (9) have a strong hope to see it on television or online media directly. it is important to make friends and comment on his social media accounts; (8) there is a strong desire to communicate directly; and, (9) have a strong hope to see it on television or online media directly. it is important to make friends and comment on his social media accounts; (8) there is a strong desire to communicate directly; and, (9) have a strong hope to see it on television or online media directly.



## Discussion

The intensity of student parasocial interactions when watching Korean dramas while staying at home during the pandemic can be said to be large. This is not wrong when many respondents stay at home, of course, apart from being busy with online lectures, but of course, they also need Korean drama entertainment media as a diversion for entertainment activities that require leaving the house. However, it is undeniable that watching Korean dramas is not only active during the pandemic but before the pandemic as well, especially for those who like Korean dramas in depth. It can be seen that the findings that we have mentioned in the analysis of the results of the study are getting bigger, this indicates an increasingly intense intensity in the category of parasocial interactions.

Therefore, the parasocial interaction deepens for the audience so that the real-life of the figure is considered a reality that is lived and felt by the audience (Hu, 2016). This is marked by the habit of viewers turning into loyal fans, faithfully following the journey of life and daily activities as recognized by respondents, by following them on the celebrity figure's social media. It might be appropriate to say that interpersonal constructs are developed by those who are identified that parasocial interactions are influenced by the motivation to explore the personal public life of figures through social media (Frederick, Lim, Clavio, & Walsh, 2012).

We found surprisingly that parasocial interactions take place more intensely when the public figures can show attractive physical appearance and verbal abilities so that the audience who find them attractive and the stronger their ability to take their perspective, the more intense their parasocial is. Stronger parasocial experiences result in higher commitment to social norms and greater enjoyment of exposure situations (Hartmann & Goldhoorn, 2011).

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the description that has been stated above, some conclusions can be conveyed, namely, the intensity of student parasocial interactions when watching Korean dramas while staying at home during the pandemic is in the agree/large category. Many fans/viewers

have a strong desire for strong parasocial interactions. Also, the encouragement of parasocial interactions is getting bigger because they are active in watching Korean dramas when they choose to stay at home, so they have a great time observing the life journey and activities of celebrities. On this occasion during the pandemic, the role of public figures during the pandemic was very effective at filtering out fake news and emphasizing positive information during the Covid-19 pandemic (eg Cohen, 2020; Mututwa, & Matsilele, 2020; Oberiri Destiny Apuke & Bahiyah Omar, 2020).

## Limitations

This study is limited to universities in the city of Banjarmasin, with random sampling. The nature of taking is limited to descriptions through a survey, of course, there are accompanying factors that need to be explored qualitatively in-depth, with a less intensive sampling of groups that are close to public figures in Korean dramas.

## Acknowledgments

We would like to express our gratitude to various parties who have helped in distributing samples, especially to students in various universities in Banjarmasin.

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