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### The Problem with Obsessed BTS' Fans

There's a fine line between support and stalking and let's all stay on the right side of that

- Joss Whedon. Bangtan Sonyeondan or known as BTS is a Korean boy band which consists of 7 members : Jungkook, Jimin, RM, V, Suga, J-hope and Jin. Their Fandom called the ARMY is one of the most known discourse communities around the globe. Since the debut of BTS in 2013, the number of armies are constantly growing which varies in culture, language, religion, nationality and so on. The US BTS ARMYs started on april 28th, 2014 with a mission to inspire, celebrate and spread BTS' message of love and acceptance to the ARMYs or anyone who crosses their path. The group has been around for more than 5 years. The members of ARMY can be anyone who loves BTS and promotes or supports their work. ARMYs communicate with each other through most of the well known social media such as twitter, Instagram, Facebook and so on. There are many social accounts that represent ARMY which are focused for the audience from different backgrounds. For instance, The US ARMYs have their own designated twitter account that they can rely on about the information of BTS and there are also various websites that promote the work BTS ARMYs or encourages ARMYs with much information about how they can support BTS and furthermore. The language that they use is technically decided by their culture or where they come from. Moreover, English is an international language which is acknowledged as the 2nd language by a large number of people from different cultures or nations. Likewise, ARMY mostly communicate throughout the social media by using english language but some nations have their own BTS ARMY fanclub in which they communicate through the language that they prefer. ARMYs are omnipresent. However, not all

ARMY are stable in terms of expressing their support to BTS, due to the tremendous obsession; some ARMY are known for violating the right to privacy of BTS which has led the members of BTS to be more scared of ARMY.

In the Beginning of the journey, BTS weren't very well known worldwide, they were just a group of teenagers who danced, sang and basically started as a rookie artist/band in their country 'South Korea'. Like BTS, there are various other K-pop bands or artists who debut through different entertainment companies. BigHit Entertainment is a company that established BTS and the more astonishing fact about BTS is that they were the first K-pop band to debut from their company. In terms of the level of the company and artist, BigHit entertainment didn't have popularity in comparison to other big entertainment companies like YG entertainment or SM entertainment. ARMYs were originally formed in South Korea. The support that BTS were grasping were from the native ARMY who communicated with each other through native language 'korean/hangul'. BTS were winning rookie awards like 'the new artist of the year' in their regional award shows such as the 'Melon music awards' in 2013. At this moment, ARMY were evolving in numerous ways, they were able to make BTS achieve their first award in the year that they debuted and the growth of popularity was truly amusing as they were compared to other famous K-pop artists such as BIGBANG and EXO who had the biggest fanbase. As the year of debut passed, BTS constantly began to win awards from other well known award shows such as MAMA (Mnet Asian Music Awards). The fanbase ARMY's growth from native to international was astonishingly intense in a way that US ARMY population outnumbered the Korean BTS ARMY. The US BTS ARMY established a website to share more love and support towards BTS and to approach more people to join this discourse community. After each and every awards, BTS was able to win the Billboard music awards under the category of the Social Artist in which the most well known artists such as Justin Beiber, Selena Gomez etc were also

nominated. However, a member of BTS named 'V' was confronting ARMYs in a live video about how their love was so intense that the BTS weren't able to live like normal human beings outside their work as an artist. While their flight to America for the billboard awards, BTS were followed by ARMY into their boarding plane or basically an ARMY bought a ticket for a seat that BTS were sitting alongside which is regarding stalking or exposing their privacy. V states in the live video chat, "I'm speaking for the whole group, we travel separately on a chartered plane. We also want to take a regular plane but when we have long-distance or short distance flights, some ARMY found out in advance (which plane) we are taking and sit in the seats in front of us or next to us. In a place like that, we can't rest comfortably, it was very uncomfortable" (Kelly, Dec 19,2019). As you can see that, BTS is happy about ARMY growing up and strengthening the members but at the same time some fans are so obsessed that they violate their privacy which makes BTS uncomfortable in public spaces. So, in order to avoid the scary and uncomfortable feelings, all the members take separate flights for long distance travel or even for short distance travel.

Jungkook, a member of BTS was also a victim of an obsessed fan or which are called 'saesangs' as he mentions, "There are actually a lot of phone calls from saesangs, so there are no other ways other than to just block them" (KayRosa, June 16,2019). These malicious activities by obsessed fans made the ARMY truly disappointed among themselves since it produces insecurity towards the members of BTS. Moreover, these cases brought various controversies about how ARMY should behave around BTS. So, the US BTS ARMY has established their own etiquette regarding the acceptable behavior around BTS. Some of the Etiquettes are as followed; 1) Please do not visit set or locations closed to the public or private places, 2) Please do not stalk the artist, 3) please do not sell or purchase the artist's personal

information, 4) please do not take photographs or record videos or audio except where permitted, 5) please do not interfere with artist-related activities and so on (ARMY Etiquette).

Today, the number of ARMY is increasing constantly day by day; approximately there are about 5 million ARMYs around the world, the USA constitutes about three hundred thousand ARMY and followed by other Asian countries like South Korea, China, Philippines and so on. Likewise, there's a hope that ARMY will begin to follow these behavioral rules and strengthen each other's beliefs and love towards BTS.

In conclusion, being an ARMY is like living a life with a balanced attitude such as not being too passive nor aggressive. Likewise, ARMYs are able to share their love and support with passion and harmony. They are thriving day by day and making the community stronger as they win more international awards and grammys awards should be on their way.

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