

# Navigating the Digital Realm: The Role of Facilitating Conditions in Social Media Use Among Korean Pop (K-pop) Fans

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## Abstract

*This observational study investigates the impact of Facilitating Conditions, as outlined in the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), on the Behavioral Intention to use social media among K-pop fans. Through qualitative analysis of social media activity, we explore how perceived technical and organizational support influences fans' engagement with social media platforms. During an observation period, online K-pop fandom communities were monitored to capture fans' natural behaviors. Results indicate that perceived technical support, such as user-friendly features and high-quality content, enhances fans' satisfaction and enjoyment with social media platforms. Additionally, the supportive nature of online fan communities fosters a sense of belonging and motivation to participate in K-pop fandom activities. The compatibility of social media with fans' existing habits further strengthens Facilitating Conditions for social media use. Despite concerns about privacy and security, fans prioritize the benefits and supportiveness of online communities. This research underscores the vital role of Facilitating Conditions in shaping fans' Behavioral Intention to use social media for K-pop-related activities, offering insights for both researchers and practitioners in understanding and supporting online fan communities within the K-pop fandom.*

**Keywords:** *K-pop; social media, Facilitating Conditions, Behavioral Intention, Technology Acceptance, UTAUT;*

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, the global phenomenon of K-pop (Korean popular music) has garnered immense attention [1] and passionate fandoms worldwide [2]. Characterized by its catchy melodies, intricate choreography, and visually captivating performances [3], K-pop has transcended cultural boundaries to become a significant cultural export from South Korea [4]. Social media platforms play a crucial role in promoting fan engagement [5], content dissemination [6], and

community building within the K-pop fandom [7], which has contributed to the growth of K-pop's global influence.

Social media has emerged as a powerful medium for K-pop fans to connect, share, and interact with fellow enthusiasts and their favorite artists [8]. Platforms such as X (formerly known as Twitter), Instagram, YouTube, and fan-driven online forums serve as virtual hubs where fans converge to express their admiration, participate in fan activities, and stay updated on the latest news and developments in the K-pop world [9]. Moreover, social media provides fans with unprecedented access to K-pop artists, enabling direct communication, interaction, and fandom-driven initiatives [10].

Amidst the growing popularity of K-pop and its pervasive presence on social media, understanding the factors that influence fans' Behavioral Intention to use social media platforms becomes increasingly pertinent. The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) offers a comprehensive framework for examining the determinants of technology adoption and usage behaviors [11]. The concept of Facilitating Conditions, which encompasses the perceived availability of technical and organizational support [12] necessary for using social media effectively, holds relevance within the context of K-pop fandom culture.

This study will investigate the impact of Facilitating Conditions on the Behavioral Intention to use social media among K-pop fans. By examining how perceived technical and organizational support influences fans' engagement with social media platforms, this research aims to provide insights into enhancing the fan experience and fostering a more supportive online environment within the K-pop fandom community.

Through a comprehensive examination of the relationship between Facilitating Conditions and Behavioral Intention to use social media among K-pop fans, this study contributes to the existing body of literature on technology adoption, fandom culture, and social media dynamics. Ultimately, a deeper understanding of these dynamics has the potential to inform strategies for content creators, social media platforms, and K-pop fan communities, leading to enhanced fan engagement and satisfaction in the digital age.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Theoretical Framework**

The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) serves as a foundational framework for understanding technology adoption and usage behaviors [13]. UTAUT posits that four key factors—Performance Expectancy, Effort Expectancy, Social Influence, and Facilitating Conditions—play a crucial role in shaping individuals' Behavioral Intention to use technology [13]. While Performance Expectancy refers to the perceived benefits of using a technology, Effort Expectancy relates to its perceived ease of use, and Social Influence reflects the influence of social factors on adoption decisions, Facilitating Conditions encompassing the perceived availability of technical and organizational support necessary for technology use.

## **2.2. Facilitating Conditions in Technology Adoption**

Facilitating Conditions refer to the perceived availability of resources and support necessary for using a technology. According to the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), Facilitating Conditions encompass technical infrastructure, organizational support, and user-friendly features that enable technology use [13]. In various contexts, including education, healthcare, and business [14-16], Facilitating Conditions have been shown to significantly influence technology adoption and user satisfaction. These findings suggest that similar factors may play a crucial role in the context of social media usage among K-pop fans.

## **2.3. Social Media Usage Among K-pop Fans**

K-pop fans are known for their active and creative use of social media to support their favorite artists, engage with fellow fans, and participate in fan-driven initiatives. Platforms such as X, Instagram, YouTube, and specialized fan forums are popular among K-pop enthusiasts for sharing content, organizing fan projects, and accessing real-time updates [9]. Studies have shown that fans' engagement on these platforms is driven by factors such as enjoyment, social interaction, and perceived usefulness [17,18]. However, the role of Facilitating Conditions in enabling and enhancing this engagement has not been thoroughly investigated.

## **2.4. Gaps in the Literature**

Despite the increasing popularity of K-pop and the extensive use of social media by its fans, there remains a significant gap in understanding the specific factors influencing K-pop fans' intentions to interact on social media. This gap is particularly evident in examining the relationship between Behavioral Intention to use social media and Facilitating Conditions within the context of K-pop fandom. While Facilitating Conditions have been identified as crucial in technology adoption generally [14-16], further research is needed to comprehensively understand their importance and impact on K-pop fans' social media use.

A recent study by Mohd Jenol and Ahmad Pazil [19] highlights the role of K-pop artists' continuous production of goods and user-generated content distribution on social media platforms in enhancing their popularity and recognition. Their research investigates the motivations behind K-pop fans' creation and promotion of social media content, revealing that fans engage in a collaborative culture where they actively produce media content and take on authoritative roles within their fan communities.

The V Live app enables K-pop idol groups from various entertainment companies to interact with their fans online through live streaming. This "live broadcasting" feature allows viewers to comment or react in real-time during a broadcast [20]. Although V Live has been operational for nearly five years, showing consistent growth in both user base and revenue, Ham and Lee [21] note that most current research focuses on other live streaming services like Periscope, Twitch, and Afreeca TV. Consequently, there is a lack of user-level research on V Live.

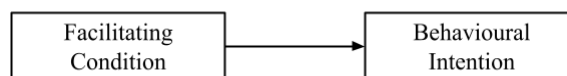
To address this knowledge gap, this study focuses on user-level research on social media, particularly examining how Facilitating Conditions influence K-pop fans' Behavioral Intentions to use social media platforms. By applying technology acceptance theories to the specific context of fan communities, this study aims to enhance understanding of the factors driving social media use among K-pop fans.

## 2.5. Facilitating Condition in the Context of K-pop Fandom

Previous research has demonstrated that Facilitating Conditions positively influence users' intentions to adopt and utilize technology [14, 22-24]. Aziz et al. [25] examined users' intentions and behavioral patterns in Malaysian technology adoption, considering ethical considerations. Their findings align with those of Nikou and Economides [26], who also identified that Facilitating Conditions positively affect users' willingness to embrace new technologies. Factors such as technical assistance can significantly influence users' willingness to use technology.

In the context of this study, supporting factors for Facilitating Conditions among K-pop fans on social media include technological infrastructure, social media literacy, supportive fan communities, organized fan activities, official artist presence, and legal access to content. These conditions foster an environment where K-pop fans can effectively and efficiently use social media platforms to engage with their favorite artists and fellow fans. Therefore, it is anticipated that Facilitating Conditions will have a significant and positive impact on the intention to use social media. Consequently, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: *FC* has a significant effect on *BI* to use social media among K-pop fans.



**Figure 1. Research Framework**

## 3. Methods

### 3.1. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design, specifically an observational approach, to explore the relationship between Facilitating Conditions and Behavioral Intention to use social media among K-pop fans. Observational research allows for the systematic collection and analysis of data through direct observation of participants' behaviors in their natural setting. In this study, the researcher will observe and analyze the social media activity of K-pop fans to gain insights into their usage patterns, content preferences, and interactions within online communities.

### 3.2. Participants

The participants in this study consist of K-pop fans who actively engage with social media platforms for K-pop-related activities. Participants will be recruited through purposive sampling, targeting individuals who self-identify as K-pop fans and are active users of social media platforms such as X. The sample will aim to

include a diverse range of participants in terms of how long they have been using the social media account, total followers and the level of fandom engagement. Table 1 shows the details of the selected account for this study.

**Table 1. Participants details**

<b>Username</b>	<b>User ID</b>	<b>Account creation</b>	<b>Total followers</b>
<b>Soompi</b>	@soompi	11/2008	3,600,000
<b>PULP Live World</b>	@pulpliveworld	12/2012	321,200
<b>Hallyu Pop</b>	@_hallyupop	09/2012	69,900
<b>astrid</b>	@swanflakes	06/2012	22,500
<b>nikki</b>	@kimjunnoodle_	06/2019	2,498
<b>EXOL only</b>	@xkaixexox	03/2016	691
<b>N/A</b>	@EXUislove	05/2021	682
<b>Osh</b>	@myeoncastle	10/2019	612
<b>Syarifah met Lay</b>	@jxhxshx	07/2019	247

### 3.3. Data Collection

Data collection will primarily involve the observation of participants' social media accounts and activities over a specified period. The researcher will systematically observe and document the content posted by participants, including text-based posts, photos, videos, comments, likes, and shares related to K-pop. Observations will be conducted non-intrusively, without direct interaction with participants, to capture their natural behaviors and interactions within the online environment.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis will involve qualitative content analysis, focusing on identifying themes, patterns, and trends in participants' social media activity related to K-pop. The researcher will analyze the observed content to discern patterns in the types of content posted, frequency of posting, engagement metrics (e.g., likes, comments), and interactions with other users or fan communities. Thematic coding will be used to categorize and code the observed data, allowing for the identification of common themes and variations across participants.

## 4. Results and Findings

The results of the observational study provide insights into the relationship between Facilitating Conditions and Behavioral Intention to use social media among K-pop fans. The analysis of social media user's activity revealed several key findings.

### 4.1. Perceived Technical Support

Refers to the availability and effectiveness of technical resources and assistance that users perceive as being available to support their use of technology. This can

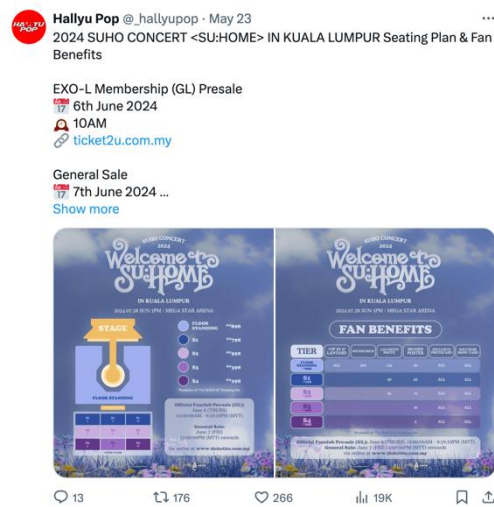
include things like user-friendly interfaces, technical help, reliable system performance, and the overall ease of use of the technology.

Figure 2 shows a screenshot from X where user @swanflakes shares a fan art of the artist EXO, which they created as a smartphone wallpaper. The user shares this customized content with friends who also admire the artist.

This behavior exemplifies how perceived technical support impacts K-pop fans' intention to use social media. The availability of user-friendly tools and a platform that facilitates easy creation and sharing of content allows users to engage creatively with their community. The ability to distribute personalized fan art illustrates how effective technical support—such as efficient sharing features—supports user engagement. The supportive fan community further encourages these interactions, enhancing the users' motivation to continue using social media. This shows that when users perceive that technical support is available and effective, their intention to use the platform increases.



**Figure 2. Fan Art Sharing**



**Figure 3. News Sharing**

Figure 3 shows a screenshot from X where user @\_hallyupop shares information about upcoming K-pop concerts in Malaysia and Singapore. This account focuses on providing updates about K-pop events.

This behavior illustrates the role of perceived technical support in encouraging social media use among K-pop fans. The ease of sharing timely and relevant information underscores the platform's capability to quickly disseminate news. Accounts like @\_hallyupop serve as information hubs, benefiting from the platform's reliable performance and effective communication tools. This organized dissemination of information keeps fans informed and engaged, demonstrating how positive technical support conditions—such as efficient news sharing and platform reliability—enhance users' intention to use social media to stay updated on K-pop activities.

By focusing on how the technical support of social media platforms (ease of use, reliability, and effective tools) impacts users' ability to engage with content and their community, these examples align with the concept of perceived technical support in Facilitating Conditions.

## 4.2. Organizational Support

Refers to the resources, infrastructure, and support systems provided to users to enable effective technology use. This includes things like technical support, training, and resources that help users make the most of the technology available to them.

Figure 4 shows a screenshot from X where user @pulpliveworld shares photos and videos from a recent K-pop concert, including personal reflections on the experience. This example highlights the role of organizational support by illustrating how fan communities facilitate effective content sharing. In this case, the support comes from the social media platform's ability to handle multimedia content and provide a space for users to share and engage with such content. The platform's infrastructure supports users by allowing them to upload and disseminate concert content, which enhances communal excitement and interaction among fans. This supportive environment helps fans feel connected and engaged, reinforcing their commitment to using social media for K-pop-related activities.



**Figure 4. Concert Content Sharing**



**Figure 5. Thought sharing**

Figure 5 presents a screenshot from X where users express praise for K-pop artists who wore shirts designed to represent the audience's nationality during the concert, even though these shirts did not represent the artists' Korean nationality. The user admires the artists' effort to connect with their audience through these visuals.

In this context, organizational support refers to how the social media platform enables and facilitates these interactions. The platform's features, such as comment sections and interaction tools, support users in expressing their opinions and engaging in discussions. This support contributes to a sense of community and inclusion within fan interactions. Although not directly provided by an organization, the platform's features and infrastructure enable users to share their thoughts and engage with others, which enhances the overall fan experience and increases the intention to use social media.

This refined explanation aligns more closely with the traditional definition of organizational support in Facilitating Conditions, focusing on how the platform's features and support systems enhance users' engagement and interaction.

### 4.3. Compatibility with Existing Systems

This refers to how well a new technology or system integrates with or fits into users' current technological environment, routines, and practices. With integration with existing tools and platforms, alignment with user practices, support for existing standards and formats, and ease of adoption.

Figure 4.3(a) shows user @soompi uses hashtags like #EXO (K-pop boy band), #SUHO (Singer from EXO group), #ByunYoHan (South Korean actor) and #Esom (South Korean actress) to participate in ongoing conversations and trends, aiming to share news with followers who are fans of these artists. By using these hashtags, the user enhances the visibility of their posts and engages with a broader audience.

This example demonstrates compatibility with existing social media practices, where hashtags are a crucial tool for connecting with larger conversations and communities. X supports this by allowing seamless hashtag use, showing that the platform fits well with users' established ways of interacting online. This compatibility makes it easier for fans to find and engage with content relevant to their interests, reinforcing their intention to use the platform.



**Figure 6. Post with hashtags**



**Figure 7. Sharing content from other social media platform**

User @kimjunnoodle\_ shares a screenshot of a conversation between K-pop artists and their followers from another social media platform, based on Figure 4.3(b). Not only the screenshot, but they also share the photo that has been shared from that social media platform too.

This example highlights cross-platform content sharing, which shows that X accommodates users' habits of interacting with content from various sources. Although X does not integrate all platforms directly with other platforms, it allows users to easily share screenshots and links (such as Figure 6, Figure 2, and Figure 3 from other social media, demonstrating flexibility and compatibility with users' existing practices. This ability to share content across platforms makes X a convenient tool for fans to stay engaged with their favorite artists and communities, reinforcing their intention to use the platform.

Both examples illustrate how X is compatible with existing systems and practices, which is a key aspect of facilitating conditions. This compatibility



encourages K-pop fans to use the platform by integrating smoothly with their established ways of sharing and engaging with content.

By emphasizing how X supports these familiar and established practices, the examples can help to clarify the concept of compatibility with existing systems in facilitating conditions within the context of K-pop fandom.

#### **4.4. Security and Privacy Concerns**

While users expressed concerns about privacy and data security on social media platforms, these concerns were outweighed by the perceived benefits of engaging with K-pop content and interacting with fellow fans. Users employed various strategies to mitigate privacy risks, such as adjusting privacy settings and being selective about the content they shared online.

Most of the participants from this study, or even the other K-pop fans that are using social media accounts, normally go anonymous. Figure 2 shares fan art but chooses to do so anonymously, avoiding the use of real names or identifiable personal information. The account profile explicitly states that the user values privacy and prefers to keep their identity confidential.

This example illustrates how security and privacy concerns influence the behavior of K-pop fans on X. The choice to share content anonymously reflects a desire to engage with the community while maintaining personal privacy. This behavior underscores the significance of facilitating conditions that respect and support users' privacy preferences, making the platform more appealing to those who are cautious about their online identity.

### **5. Conclusion**

As recommended by the previous researcher to focus on K-pop fans behavior [27], this study has investigated the relationship between Facilitating Conditions and Behavioral Intention to use social media among K-pop fans through a qualitative observational approach. The findings provide valuable insights into the factors shaping fans' engagement with social media platforms and their interactions within the K-pop fandom community.

The results of the observational study suggest that Facilitating Conditions, including perceived technical and organizational support, play a significant role in motivating K-pop fans to use social media for fandom-related activities. The availability of user-friendly features, high-quality media content, and supportive online fan communities enhances fans' enjoyment and satisfaction with social media platforms, fostering a positive user experience.

Furthermore, the compatibility of social media with fans' existing habits and interests contributes to the ease of adoption and sustained usage of social media for K-pop fandom activities. Despite concerns about privacy and security, fans are generally willing to overlook these issues in favor of the perceived benefits and supportiveness of online fan communities.

These findings have important implications for content creators, social media platforms, and fan communities seeking to enhance the fan experience and foster a

more vibrant and engaged K-pop fandom community. By understanding and addressing the Facilitating Conditions that influence fans' Behavioral Intention to use social media, stakeholders can optimize the design, functionality, and support mechanisms of social media platforms to better meet the needs and preferences of K-pop fans.

In conclusion, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamics shaping fan engagement and participation in the digital age. By highlighting the importance of Facilitating Conditions in shaping fans' Behavioral Intention to use social media for K-pop fandom activities, this study informs strategies for fostering a more supportive, inclusive, and vibrant online community within the K-pop fandom culture.

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