

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Nowadays, K-Pop becomes popular and is being discussed in various countries. People who become fans of K-Pop, placing themselves in a community, are called as fandom. Furthermore, the popularity of K-Pop leads the emergence of fan bases in Indonesia then. According to the survey conducted by *Jakpat*, it reveals that 196 or equals to 24.72% out of 793 respondents admit themselves as members of official fan bases with a range of age from 15-35 years old and also become the most prominent K-pop fans in Indonesia (Fandia 2016). The result of the survey indicates that there is a tendency of K-pop fans in Indonesia to interact each other within fan bases. This result can also be seen by the interaction within fan bases among Indonesia citizens. Surabaya is an example of the city where we can find some K-Pop fan bases. One of K-Pop fan bases is *EXO-L Surabaya* which is associated with EXO's fans. In this case, EXO-L itself is a fandom which consists of EXO's fans. The idea of fandom or fan base is supposed to be a place for fans to interact and share information about their idols (Price and Robinson 2016).

The relationship between an idol and fans is a relationship of interdependence with one another (Yano 1997). For example, fans provide direct support to the idol in terms of economically, such as the outcome of selling album and merchandise. Then the idol responds indirectly by showing some fans services such as newsletters, preprinted seasonal cards sent to members, and pre-set activities at parties. Furthermore, fans make themselves as elements that can

determine the success of an idol's career. Basically, the essence of fans is to support their idol. However, in *EXO-L Surabaya* fan base, fans do not do what they use to be with their idols. In *EXO-L Surabaya*, there are some fans who not only interact and share information about their idol but also make their idol as a commodity.

The meaning of fans is important for the idol itself. It is because fans take an important role for the idol's career. Besides, there are also some essences supporting the real meaning of fans such as: first, fans who show their support or loyalty to their idol in various ways; second, fans who voluntarily collect all types of information of the idols from their personal data, habits, even the idols' fashion. Fans also collect the products or official merchandises such as official album and seasonal greeting DVD of the idols (Zhang, et al. 2015). K-pop fans are known to be loyal to their idols. They do not hesitate to spend a lot of money to buy all kinds of knick-knacks about their idol. They even buy unnecessary things such as photo card and postcard. The ownership of the merchandises can relate to the loyalty of fans to their idol. Moreover, owning the official merchandises become a way for fans to prove and show off that they are fans who are willing to splurge on such expensive things.

Although fans have an important role for the idol's career, fans also have different role which can be arguably detrimental for the idol's management. It is because some of *EXO-L Surabaya* members take an advantage from this condition to gain profit. They take an advantage from the negotiation of giving expensive price for the merchandises. As a result, some fans may not afford the merchandises just because they do not want to pay a lot of money or they really do not have money

to buy ones. In the developed country such as Indonesia, the price for an official merchandise is initially expensive. It becomes more and more expensive due to the international shipping cost and tax. Another problem also arises when those fans cannot afford the official merchandises. This kind of phenomenon can be related to the textual poaching. It means that some of *EXO-L Surabaya* members take an advantage by providing the other fans such merchandises but with more reasonable price.

Textual poaching is a common phenomenon which happens in a fandom (Jenkins 1992). The issue of textual poaching was first proposed by Henry Jenkins. In his book *Textual Poachers: Television Fans & Participatory Culture*, he defines that the idea of textual poaching refers to fans who become consumers and also producers at the same time (Jenkins 1992). On the other hand, the meaning of textual poaching is when fans re-create the original to their own imagination and creativity (Isnomo 2014; Fuschillo 2016). From these previous explanations, textual poaching, which is done by fans, is nothing but a way to gain profit. According to Jenkins (1992), textual poaching is not part of piracy action but it is a creativity activity in a fandom which has been agreed with all of the members in a fandom itself (Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington 2017). In this case, the members in the same fandom share similar opinion to reproduce or recreate based on their own interpretation.

Because of this happening phenomenon, there are a lot of fans who want to do poaching because there is a big chance to gain profit. In Indonesia, for example, textual poaching phenomenon has been largely discussed from a various point of

views. There are some previous studies stating that textual poaching is the fans' activity that encourages the fans themselves to become both producer and consumer at the same time. Although the findings of the studies were the same, but the media used was different. The first study focused on fan music videos on YouTube which imitated the original video clip (Dewi 2013). This study covered poaching activity within the fan community, specifically video making and fans' participation in Gangnam Style phenomenon as it becomes trend in Indonesia in 2012. The second study focused on youth activity in visiting butler café which is done by Isnomo. She explained that poaching activity by fans is related to *fujoshi* activity in a role-playing servant mode in butler café Surabaya (Isnomo 2014). The other textual poaching activity could be seen by the consumption of *fanfiction* which focused on *yaoi fanfiction* and it was done by the member of *Inspirit Surabaya* (Puasari 2016). This study explained more about *yaoi fanfiction* as fans' poaching products and factors which could make *Inspirit Surabaya* consuming infinite *yaoi fanfiction*. As several previous studies cover different field and point of view of textual poaching by fans, this study attempts to enrich the variety of poaching activity in a fandom. Furthermore, the activity of poaching done by fans is recognized as a way for not only creating pleasure for the fans itself but also gaining economical profit.

However, textual poaching is not only reflecting an activity to create new cultural material but also serving a tool to gain profit. In some fandoms, fans use their texts as commodification. For example, in *EXO-L Surabaya* fan base, some of the members produce unofficial merchandises or imitation items and then they sell it through online media. They tend to produce unofficial merchandises such as T-

shirt, keychain, sticker, poster, photobook, and so on by displaying their idols' face as the icon. They sell the unofficial ones with cheaper price to attract the other EXO fans who do not want spend a lot of money but still want to have such merchadises. It implies that fans can produce exactly the same things or even modify the merchandises by themselves to meet certain expectation. In addition, the members of *EXO-L Surabaya* is another variation of textual poaching which tends to gain profit.

EXO is a South Korean boy band which first debuted in 2012 by S.M. Entertainment (Hicap 2018). This group originally consisted of 12 members, but in 2014, two members left the group and it was followed by another one in 2015. By 2015, there were nine people of EXO members named Suho, Xiumin, Lay, Baekhyun, Chen, Chanyeol, D.O, Kai, and Sehun. Among Korean boy band which first debuted in 2012, EXO stands out the most and has a huge amount of fandom. EXO's fans are not only from South Korea but also from international. It is proved by four world concert tours in Asia and America (Cempaka and Putri 2018). Therefore, EXO is also called as nation's pick by Korean as it represents Korea in many international events such as: Asian Games in Incheon in 2014, The Dubai Fountain Burj Khalifa in 2017, and PyeongChang Winter Olympics in 2018 (Kang 2019). Furthermore, in 2018, EXO officially became quintuple million sellers. It means that they successfully sold an album up to one million copies for the fifth time. EXO also makes history by achieving 10 million in total album sales and it makes them as the first group in Korea which can sell the album over 10 million

within their debut after 2000 (Lim 2018). As its success in South Korea, EXO gains international interest.

In Indonesia itself, EXO started to gain a huge popularity after performing two concerts in Jakarta and became one of the performers in Music Bank World Tour. Moreover, the number of tickets sold out for those concerts are 14.958 in 2014 and 15.702 in 2016 (Cempaka and Putri 2018). It signifies that EXO has pretty huge number of fans in Indonesia. In addition, as the popularity of EXO in Indonesia, the communities which consist of EXO's fans start to emerge as a medium to interact each other. Despite of some Korean boy bands such as 2PM and Super Junior have previously held concert in Indonesia, it cannot be compared to EXO's debut in 2012. As a boy band debuted in 2012, EXO has the fastest time to make their solo concert in Indonesia. As comparison, there are also some boy bands which held their debut in 2012 such as VIXX, BtoB, and Nuest. VIXX has their first fan meeting in Indonesia in 2017, BtoB has their first concert in Jakarta in 2018, and NUEST held their first concert in 2019. On other hand, EXO held their first concert in 2014 and only took two years to make concert in Indonesia after the debut. It means that the demand of EXO concert for Indonesian is pretty high and then it can be related with the number of EXO's fans in Indonesia

The popularity of EXO is closely related to their image as idols. As public figures, each member of EXO has their own responsibility to build a good image in capturing public interest. In every comeback, EXO shows masculine image through the concept of their album and costume. However, the writer found that masculine is not only image created by S.M Entertainment. It is proved by creating a cute

concept for line sticker which undertakes a partnership with Line Corporation. In addition, some of poacher fans also produce merchandises with cute image. Some of the informants, in this study, found that there is a demand of EXO cute merchandises for the fans. It then creates a chance for poacher fans as S.M Entertainment does not provide the cute ones.

Based on the explanation above, we have already known that fans can fully support their idols in a various way such as collecting all types of the idols' information through personal data, habits, or even fashion. In opposite, fans can also become the ones who take an advantage of their idols. Hence, it becomes interesting to be discussed because fans in todays era tend to create a new job field which can reduce unemployment rate by becoming poacher. This study was conducted to analyze another essence how textual poaching is built by a fan base. Then, to support the findings, this study also look on the current situation in Indonesia as the informant's background.

In order to analyze the issue, this study uses the theory of textual poaching by Henry Jenkins and focuses on the activities of *EXO-L Surabaya* members who produce unofficial merchandises to fullfil the fans' expectation about their idols. Besides, how they also gain profit from the production of those unofficial merchandises. The discussion is combined with an interpretative phenomenological analysis which covers the detail examination of the participant's life world and attempts to explore personal experience.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

- How is textual poaching practiced by the members of *EXO-L Surabaya*?

## 1.3 Objective of the Study

Based on the statement of the problems above, this study aims to examine how textual poaching is practiced by members of *EXO-L Surabaya* and to what extent does this textual poaching practice is significant.

## 1.4 The Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is to reveal that textual poaching is a part of creative industry in today's era, especially by using *EXO-L Surabaya* as the object of analysis. Fans are described as a group of people who always support their idols in a various way. One of the ways is to buy their idols' official merchandises. Fans who do this activity can be called as consumers. However, it is being a controversy when fans are supposed to support their idols but instead of doing that, they do textual poaching for personal gain. Therefore, the focus of this study is the representation of fans who produce unofficial goods inside the EXO's fandom, particularly in Surabaya. By conducting this study, the writer hopes to give a valuable insight to the readers as this study gives another fans' perspective of textual poaching between piracy and creativity using Jenkins theory of textual poaching.



## 1.5 Definition of Key Terms

Creative Industry: An industrial action derived from the use of creativity, skills, and individual talents inherent in a person (Kamil 2008)

EXO-L : EXO-L is an association which is made for EXO fans. EXO-L stands for EXO-Love. It is an official fandom's name created by S.M Entertainment on 8 April 2014. (Cempaka and Putri 2018)

Fandom : A community groups of fans who have the same interests and goals in terms of music, comics, books, and so on (Hasby 2013; Wardani 2014)

Merchandising :Merchandising is a form of promotion to trigger the buying behavior of an item (Buttle 2014).

Textual poaching :A fan practice which involves creativity and productivity (Laughey 2007). It can also be interpreted as a form of resistance to commercial culture in producing their own outcome through the production of fan culture (Chin 2010).