

THE SHIFTING FROM THE MALE GAZE TO THE FEMALE GAZE IN K-POP GIRL GROUPS AS THE IMPACT OF #METOO MOVEMENT IN SOUTH KOREA

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pergeseran dari pandangan laki-laki ke pandangan perempuan pada industri K-pop yang dipengaruhi oleh gerakan #MeToo di Korea Selatan. Pergeseran ini ditandai dengan penggunaan kembali ide pemberdayaan perempuan oleh grup idola wanita. Penelitian ini menggunakan konsep Jaringan Advokasi Transnasional dan pendekatan postfeminisme, yang dikaji dengan metode penelitian kualitatif dengan analisis sekunder dan analisis tekstual. Hasil dari penelitian ini menemukan bahwa pergeseran dari pandangan laki-laki ke pandangan perempuan dalam grup wanita K-pop terjadi melalui pergeseran dari objektifikasi ke subjektifikasi perempuan; fokus pada individualisme, pilihan, dan pemberdayaan; serta menunjukkan ironi dan rasa mengetahui, sehingga dapat disimpulkan bahwa gerakan #MeToo berdampak pada industri K-pop karena terjadi pergeseran pandangan dan perubahan pada masyarakat Korea untuk mulai menerima idola yang mendukung pemberdayaan perempuan dan kesetaraan gender.

Abstract

This research analyses the shift from the male gaze to the female gaze in K-pop girl groups impacted by the #MeToo movement in South Korea. The shift is marked by the thriving of women empowerment ideas by girl groups. This research uses the Transnational Advocacy Network (TAN) and postfeminism, examined using qualitative research methodology with secondary and textual analysis. This research finds that the shifting from the male gaze to the female gaze in K-pop girl groups occurred through the shift from objectification to subjectification of women, focusing on individualism, choice, and empowerment, as well as showing irony and knowingness. Therefore, the #MeToo movement has impacted the K-pop industry because the gaze has shifted, and Korean society has started to accept idols supporting women's empowerment and gender equality.

INTRODUCTION

The #MeToo movement that entered South Korea in 2018 started in the United States. Known as a country with a deeply rooted patriarchal system, #MeToo as a feminist movement developed rapidly until it attracted attention and received support from the general public and mass media in South Korea. Women who are victims of sexual violence and harassment have come together to express their experiences. In this regard, disseminating information and expanding the network as a feminist campaign followed by women globally indicates the #MeToo movement as a Transnational Advocacy Network (TAN) (Dwi & Elvianti, 2022). At the same time as many demonstrations happened by #MeToo activists in South Korea, BLACKPINK, a popular K-pop female idol group, released a song titled “*Ddu-Du Ddu-Du*” with empowering lyrics and a strong women's image. The concept of strong women, which BLACKPINK revived, is gradually changing the K-pop industry and the girl group concept. Most K-pop girl groups are crafted to please the male gaze to attract male fans, where women have to act cute or sexy and are dependent on men. The shift from the male gaze, which is characterised by the objectification of women, has changed to the female gaze, with

more varied depictions of women, and song lyrics emphasise women as subjects who have their own thoughts and feelings. In this research, the shifting from the male gaze to the female gaze in K-pop girl groups will be analysed further through post-feminism theory due to similar characteristic which emphasises women's ability to act with masculine aspects but also maintains the natural feminine every woman has (Prasetyo, Palupi, & Wibowo, 2023).

The root of the #MeToo movement may be traced back to the advocacy of an African American activist, Tarana Burke, in 2006. In October 2017, Alyssa Milano used it as a Twitter hashtag to speak about her story of sexual harassment by film mogul Harvey Weinstein. It steered to an outburst of similar stories from women worldwide. In early 2018, prosecutor Seo Jihyun encouraged numerous Korean women to disclose their experiences with harassment through the movement. Alongside, the K-pop group BLACKPINK released “*Ddu-Du Ddu-Du*,” a song instilled with a message of female empowerment, which inspired the depiction of empowered women in the realm of K-pop girl groups amidst the blossoming #MeToo movement in South Korea (Rahardjo, Yoanita, & Wahjudianata, 2019).

K-pop, short for Korean popular music, distinguishes itself through distinctive sound styles, dance choreography, and storytelling (Kim, Hwang, & Kim, 2021). While traditionally, K-pop artists have steered clear of integrating social issues into their music, perhaps due to concerns over commercial viability and potential controversy (Park, 2022), there has been a notable shift in recent years. Artists are gradually addressing social and gender-related issues in their songs, indicating a progressive change in the thematic landscape of K-pop (Fitri & Kusuma, 2021).

BLACKPINK, which emerged as a vanguard of the third generation of K-pop girl groups, debuted in 2016 under the auspices of YG Entertainment. They have been pivotal in pioneering the "girl crush" concept within the industry—a portrayal of assertiveness and self-assurance that defies the traditional, demurer female image aimed at satisfying the male gaze. This quartet, comprising Kim Jisoo (Jisoo), Jennie Kim (Jennie), Roseanne Park (Rosé), and Lalisa Manoban (Lisa), embodies an active, confident persona, showcasing women who command their

narrative without conforming to the conventional male perspective.

This portrayal by BLACKPINK marks a distinct departure from previous South Korean pop culture standards. Historically, girl groups have been confined within a rigid paradigm of traditional femininity, sculpted to allure male audiences with an image of passivity and dependence. The prevailing archetype, perpetuated as the ideal, was the innocent, cute girl evolving into a charming young woman—an image meticulously crafted and showcased by first and second-generation K-pop groups like SES and Girls' Generation. These earlier groups excelled in epitomising this concept, which had been long established as the industry norm (Chang, 2020; Park & Kim, 2019).

SES¹, the pioneering K-pop girl group under SM Entertainment, epitomised the innocent archetype, as observed by Lee and Yi (2020), which came to embody the quintessence of the 'innocent and cute' archetype. Lee and Yi (2020) note that SES's musical narratives often centred on female characters who sought validation from their male counterparts, a theme resonating with

¹ S.E.S, a seminal K-pop girl group signed under SM Entertainment, made their debut in 1997 and were

active until their disbandment in 2002. The trio, consisting of Choi Sunghee (Bada/Sea), Kim Yoojin (Eugene), and Kunimitsu Shoo (Shoo).

the male gaze prevalent in the era's pop culture.

Similarly, Girls' Generation, another influential group that debuted in 2007 under the same entertainment label, continued this trend. The group's lyrics often reflected a narrative where women were portrayed as dependent on men to instruct them about love. This perspective has been critiqued for its reinforcement of disempowering stereotypes (Kim, 2013).

However, the advent of the "girl crush" concept signifies a paradigm shift from catering to the male gaze to embracing the female gaze in K-pop. This shift is evident in groups like (G)I-DLE² and NewJeans³, representing the fourth generation of K-pop. (G)I-DLE, formed by Cube Entertainment, has earned acclaim for its potent image and self-produced music by group leader Soyeon, which often addresses gender inequities and the objectification of women (McDonald, 2022). NewJeans, a 2022 debut under ADOR Entertainment, presents the female gaze through depictions of adolescent girls' lives,

encapsulating friendship experiences and romantic awakenings.

This reorientation towards the female gaze within K-pop girl groups, paralleling the rise of the #MeToo movement, can be analysed through post feminism. The #MeToo movement in South Korea, advocating against sexual harassment, has galvanised women to challenge patriarchal norms and misogyny, fostering solidarity among women. Through their performances and music, K-pop girl groups serve as a conduit for amplifying diverse female perspectives, thereby inspiring and modelling empowerment for women (Lee & Yi, 2020).

Prior to the shifting in K-pop girl groups, the #MeToo movement as a feminist campaign entered South Korea in early 2018. The massive spread of the movement started in the United States and succeeded in advocating for South Korean women. The young generation of women in South Korea works as the driving force in the #MeToo movement to demand changes in their patriarchal society (Shin, 2021). Based on Kiyong Shin's analysis in her journal

² (G)I-DLE is a girl group from Cube Entertainment who debuted in 2018 currently consists of five members, namely Jeon Soyeon (Soyeon), Cho Miyeon (Miyeon), Nicha Yontarak (Minnie), Song Yuqi (Yuqi), and Yeh Shuhua (Shuhua).

³ NewJeans consists of five young girls, namely Kim Minji (Minji), Hanni Pham (Hanni), Danielle Marsh

(Danielle), Kang Haerin (Haerin), and Lee Hyein (Hyein). NewJeans is produced and managed by Min Heejin, a well-known female visual and art director who is currently the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of entertainment.

(2021), Korean women in the 20s and 30s organised various events and raised the hashtags on social media to support sexual harassment victims and to broaden the network of the movement. Shin also explained that these efforts are a form of solidarity towards victims of sexual violence from young girls and women as the new generation of Korean feminists (Shin, 2021).

Alfaqah Dwi and Witri Elvianti (2022) analysed Hollywood celebrities' role in propagating the #MeToo movement, supported by the case study of the #MeToo movement in South Korea, using two characteristics of TAN theory, namely political entrepreneur, and boomerang pattern. They concluded that the role of Hollywood celebrities in advocating the movement by drawing media and public attention successfully motivated sexual harassment victims worldwide to participate, including in South Korea.

Along with the extensive campaign by Korean #MeToo movement supporters, BLACKPINK released the "*Ddu-Du Ddu-Du*" song with a strong and confident image. In Jieun Lee and Hyangsoon Yi's journal (2020), girl groups in Korea have recently begun to form the concept of strong sisters or '*ssen-unni*' by presenting a strong female

image after the #MeToo movement happened and BLACKPINK's success with the song "*Ddu-Du Ddu-Du*". Lee and Yi stated that the '*ssen-unni*' concept is an action from the K-pop industry in voicing feminism and gender equality by depicting K-pop female idols as strong, confident women and giving a sense of role models to young girls.

The notion of K-pop girl group image shifting is supported by analysis from Jungyoon Chang (2020), which explains the performance of three K-pop groups, namely BTS, ITZY, and (G)I-DLE who portray new gender perspectives. According to Chang, the soft creator performance shown by BTS shows is contrary to traditional masculinity in South Korea. Meanwhile, ITZY and (G)I-DLE are strong advocators using the strong sister concept to criticise traditional gender roles Chang's notion aligns with Lee and Yi's notion that K-pop girl groups act as role models for women to inspire them to find their identities (Chang, 2020).

In this regard, the traditional gender roles in K-pop girl groups portray the male gaze concept. In Liz Jonas's journal (2021) mentioned that girl groups are crafted to cater to male fans and marketed towards the male gaze by being shaped to fulfil men's specific needs for women. The male gaze in K-pop

girl groups happened due to the dominance of male workers in the industry and the lack of participation from K-pop girl group members in the creative processes. Hence, most of the girl groups were pictured with innocent or sexy images to show men the figure of ideal girlfriends (Jonas, 2021).

In the media industry, women have been used as objects of fantasy and must be able to fulfil the male gaze since patriarchy is rooted within society and industries are dominated by men. When the #MeToo movement emerged, and South Korean women used the movement to express sexual harassment cases, feminism and gender equality started to attract public attention. Supported by BLACKPINK's strong women concept, the male gaze in K-pop girl groups that portrays the image of innocent or sexy women who need male assurance has shifted to the female gaze with a women-empowering image.

Through all these developments, there is no previous literature combining the shifting of gaze in K-pop girl groups and the #MeToo movement with four strategies of TAN as the focus of analysis. In seeing the gap, this study would like to analyse the shifting from the male gaze to the female gaze in K-pop girl groups as the #MeToo movement's impact in South Korea.

Therefore, this study examines the influence of the #MeToo movement on transitioning from the male gaze to the female gaze in K-pop girl groups. Specifically, it focuses on the conceptual and musical contributions of five girl groups—SES with "*(Cause) I'm Your Girl*," Girls' Generation with "*Gee*," BLACKPINK with "*Ddu-Du Ddu-Du*," (G)I-DLE with "*Queencard*," and NewJeans with "*Ditto*"—as they navigate this cultural shift.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Transnational Advocacy Network (TAN)

The #MeToo movement first happened in the United States and then spread to many countries internationally without any barriers, which identified it as a TAN (Dwi & Elvianti, 2022). As a transnational network, the occurrence of the #MeToo movement has a crucial role in influencing the issue of gender inequality in countries that carried out the propaganda. According to Keck and Sikkink (1998), the Transnational Advocacy Network (TAN) is an advocacy network containing individuals with similar viewpoints formed transnationally to promote ideas, principles, and social issues.

TAN has four strategies that activists can implement to achieve their advocacy goals. The first strategy is information politics, which means the ability of TAN

activists to generate and disseminate credible information quickly to attract sympathy and make an impact (Keck & Sikkink, 1998). The second strategy is symbolic politics, which means the ability to represent a situation by using symbols, events, and stories to spread the message to audiences (Keck & Sikkink, 1998). The third strategy is to leverage politics, which means the TAN activists seek help from powerful actors such as governments to influence public opinion (Keck & Sikkink, 1998). The fourth strategy is accountability politics, where activists push the government to take responsibility for issues (Keck & Sikkink, 1998).

Post Feminism

Post feminism is often referred to as third-wave feminism. Although some scholars differentiate these two approaches, in practice, the two terms are considered the same and are often used to conclude all post-1970s feminist developments. This research uses Rosalind Gill's theory, which defines post feminism as sensibility, in analysing the shifting from the male gaze to the female gaze in K-pop girl groups and Amanda D. Lotz's theory of post feminism in exploring the representation of women in popular media to discuss the shifting of the male gaze

to female gaze in K-pop girl groups as the impact of the #MeToo movement in South Korea.

Post feminism could be considered a sensibility that characterises an increasing number of films, television shows, and other media products (Gill, 2007). There are nine notions from Gill's theory, which include: first, femininity is a bodily property that emphasises women's bodies as the property of femininity. Second, there is a marked sexualisation of culture, which means in post feminism, the sexuality of women is intended to be commercialised. Third, the shift from objectification to subjectification, which means there is a shift from a male judging gaze to a female narcissistic gaze. Fourth, a focus on individualism, choice, and empowerment emphasises women's desire to please themselves. Fifth, an emphasis on self-surveillance, monitoring and self-discipline underlines that self-surveillance is reflected by the hard work, evaluation, and self-discipline that women do for themselves to be better versions of themselves (Gill, 2007). Sixth, the dominance of a makeover paradigm depicts that the solution to life's difficulties is changing and turning oneself into a newer person. Seventh, the reassertion of sexual difference emphasises that there are

differences between male and female sexuality. Eighth, irony and knowingness by flattering the audiences because they have succeeded in 'knowing through'. The last is the construction of feminism, which means the media is entangled between feminist and anti-feminist.

Furthermore, the four attributes of Lotz's theory of post feminism in media consist of: First, explore the diverse relations to power women inhabit where post feminism makes popular media able to portray complex and distinct female characters even though they have similarities in femininity (Lotz, 2001). Second, depictions of varied feminist solutions and loose organisations of activism where, according to Lotz (2001), the strategies for activism related to post feminism use new approaches that often follow new social movements that are happening within the society. Third, deconstruct binary categories of gender and sexuality, instead viewing these categories as flexible and indistinct where popular media raise the performative nature of gender and sexuality and are not limited to individual women or men with heterosexual and homosexual sexuality (Lotz, 2001). The last is how situations illustrating the contemporary struggles faced by women and feminists are raised and

examined within series where the struggles or issues faced by women are displayed in popular media, along with their perspectives or solutions (Lotz, 2001).

RESEARCH METHOD

The data in this research is examined using qualitative methodology with secondary analysis and textual analysis.

Secondary analysis allows researchers to use and collect existing qualitative data to create another research different from the original works (Heaton, 1998). Researchers can also provide new knowledge or support existing theories by searching with comprehensive reviews and evaluations from secondary data collected from other parties, such as news, reports, publications, and journal articles. Furthermore, to analyse the shift from the male gaze to the female gaze in K-pop girl groups, this research uses textual analysis to interpret media to understand the relationship between media, culture, and society (Brennen, 2017).

In textual analysis, researchers examine research by evaluating the meanings in texts and identifying the written, visual, and spoken language that contains the social practices, representations, and stories about society's lives. Every data finding from secondary analysis and textual analysis will

be reviewed and evaluated to make the research as academic as possible and to answer the question of the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#MeToo Movement in South Korea as Transnational Advocacy Network (TAN)

The #MeToo movement started to spread in South Korea. It succeeded in exposing a lot of sexual harassment cases in South Korea after being initiated by Seo Jihyun, a public prosecutor who admitted publicly through an interview on a local news show. Seo was voicing her sexual violence cases in the workplace that were done by her former head prosecutor, Ahn Taegeun. The advocacy of the #MeToo movement that first happened in the United States then spread to many states without any barriers, which identified the #MeToo movement as a TAN (Dwi & Elvianti, 2022). In this regard, the advocacy of the #MeToo movement occurred based on four TAN strategies: Information Politics, Symbolic Politics, Leverage Politics, and Accountability Politics.

The information politics strategy was implemented by spreading the information about the #MeToo movement through social media, mass media, and a coalition network, which successfully broadened the network of

supporters by using the hashtag to come out after being sexually harassed and abused. The hashtag #SchoolMeToo was frequently used and positioned as the first rank on most tweeted social issues in South Korea during 2018, followed by feminism and 'molka' or secret camera in the second and third rank which can be seen in the following Figure 1 (TwitterKorea, 2018). Furthermore, South Korean television also displayed updated information and news related to the #MeToo movement. The information politics strategy was also formed by creating a coalition network named Citizens Action to Support the MeToo Movement, which started advocacy activities to broaden the #MeToo movement supporters and demand gender equality.

Figures 1. TwitterKorea Most Tweeted about Social Issue



Source: Screenshot of The Tweet from TwitterKorea (TwitterKorea, 2018).

In the symbolic politics strategy, the hashtag #MeToo was used in South Korea with some extensions, namely the hashtags #SchoolMeToo and #WithYou, which were used to show support and solidarity with the victims (Shin, 2021). In addition, #MeToo movement activists and supporters held and organised several demonstrations and conferences to attract public attention. The coalition network of the #MeToo movement, Citizen's Action to Support the MeToo Movement, organised a public event called 'Women Speak for 2018 Minutes Straight', symbolising the year the #MeToo movement entered South Korea. Not only in 2018, the #MeToo movement remains the central theme of the celebration event of International Women's Day on March 8, 2019, where 5.000 people were wearing purple clothes and holding research signs gender equality completes democracy (Yonhap News, 2019).

The leverage politics implemented by #MeToo activists as the less powerful actors to seek help and leverage from powerful actors to affect public opinion led to the expansion of network campaigns. In this regard, #MeToo supporters with Korean Women's Association United (KWAU), the

most extensive women's NGO in South Korea, held several civil actions to support the #MeToo movement from 2018 until 2020. In addition, the advocacy of the #MeToo movement successfully attracted Moon Jaein, who was the twelfth president of South Korea, to urge police to investigate the sexual abuse claims that emerged and kept growing numbers (Yang, 2018).

The accountability politics happened through the role of #MeToo activists to encourage the government to take responsibility for the issues that occurred. President Moon Jaein, who proclaimed himself as a feminist president, vowed commitment to support gender equality and protect women as his mission during his presidential period, took responsibility for the issue by making amendments to the Equal Employment Opportunity and Work-Family Balance Assistance Act (EEO Act) on May 29, 2018. The key features of the amendment are "sexual harassment training, protections for victims and witnesses of harassment, obligation to investigate, confidentiality, and further obligations on employers" (Jumabhoy & Lee, 2018).

The advocacy of the #MeToo movement as a TAN brought changes to how Korean society views and became aware of feminism, gender equality, and sexual

harassment issues where Korean women dared to speak up and got support from media and organisations. In this regard, BLACKPINK, as the third generation K-pop girl group, has the agency in the creative process to discuss and choose the songs they want to perform. Therefore, in BLACKPINK's interview for their album "SQUARE UP", Jennie stated that their reason for choosing "*Ddu-Du Ddu-Du*" as the title track because the song recently been produced in 2018 and had the intense energy and powerful vibe, they wanted to show (Soompi, 2018). Furthermore, after the #MeToo movement happened, K-pop girl groups started to produce and release songs with self-love, self-assertiveness, and messages about women's empowerment. In the current generation, K-pop girl groups have developed with more fresh, colourful, playful, and lively concepts, with their songs remaining to comprehend the message of affirmation and empowerment for women.

The Shifting from the Male Gaze to the Female Gaze in Korean Pop Girl Groups

As previously explained, where the #MeToo movement has succeeded in giving courage to Korean women to raise their voices for gender equality and women

empowerment, K-pop girl groups started to have a shifting gaze. The term male gaze is the depiction of men towards women in the camera according to their fantasies (Mulvey, 1975). In gender and feminist studies, the male gaze is closely related to male surveillance towards women's bodies, thereby proving patriarchal control in society (Yu, 2021). Meanwhile, the term female gaze is created as the reaction toward the male gaze, where women become subject and no longer controlled by men. The female gaze can make men women's visual objects (Kusumaningrum & Suweleh, 2019).

The aspect of femininity as a bodily property emphasises women's bodies as a property of femininity, a source of women's identity, and the centre of postfeminism instead of using the presentation of women with nurturing and motherhood image because women's bodies require self-surveillance, self-monitoring, discipline, and consumer spending to conform with the judgements of female attractiveness (Gill, 2007). Idols' appearance and bodies are vital in K-pop girl groups. For example, members of (G)-IDLE are dancing and showing their bodies proudly in "*Queencard*" music video as shown in Figure 2. Women idols must follow a strict diet and exercise routine to be

able to have an ideal and perfect body and learn makeup and fashion to have an attractive appearance (Wang, 2022).

Figures 2. (G)I-DLE - “Queencard”



Source: ((G)I-DLE, 2023).

A marked sexualisation of culture aspect discusses how media utilise the discourse of sex and sexuality because sexuality is intended to be commercialised (Gill, 2007). K-pop women idols adopt sexual discourse and become sexual icons, which also emphasises the previous notion that the body becomes an identity and strength for women. Following the notion, the lyrics of "Ddu-Du Ddu-Du" from BLACKPINK and "Queencard" from (G)I-DLE talk explicitly about their confidence and awareness of their sexy bodies in the following Table 1:

Table 1. BLACKPINK's "Ddu-Du Ddu-Du" and (G)I-DLE's "Queencard" lyrics

BLACKPINK - “Ddu-Du Ddu-Du”	(G)I-DLE - “Queencard”
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<p><i>Ayy, chaghan eolgure geureoji mothan taedo (Huh)</i> <i>Ganyeorin mommae sok garyeojin volumeeun du baero (Yah, yah, double up) (Woo!)</i></p>	<p><i>Queencard, I'm hot My boob and booty is hot [sic]</i> <i>Spotlight nal bwa I'm a star, star, star</i></p>
<p><i>I may look sweet, but I don't act like it (Huh)</i> <i>My slender figure hides twice the volume (Yah, yah, double up)</i></p>	<p><i>Queencard, I'm hot My boob and booty is hot [sic]</i> <i>Spotlight, look at me I'm a star, star, star</i></p>

Sources: (Genius, 2018; Genius, 2023).

According to Gill (2007), in a shift from objectification to subjectification, there is a shift from a male judging gaze to a female self-policing narcissistic gaze, which means women are becoming subjects and not objects in media. The concept of post feminism that supports women's subjectivism implies that women could be themselves by building active, confident, and in accordance with what they want. In the "Gee" music video by Girls' Generation that can be seen in Figure 3, the members of Girls' Generation are displayed as mannequins in a clothing store and a man as staff walks around them. This key part portrays the male's surveillance towards women's bodies and depicts the K-pop women idols' objectification to cater to the male gaze (Kim, 2013).

Figures 3. Girls' Generation - "Gee"



Source: (SMTOWN, 2009).

In this regard, the shift from objectification to subjectification of women in BLACKPINK, (G)I-DLE, and NewJeans is depicted by how they are able to portray women being themselves, full of confidence, and having fun in their music videos instead of using the image that is aiming to make K-pop girl groups as women who are trying to attract the attention of men. The female gaze in K-pop girl groups emphasises women as subjects by describing the emotional side of women and provides a state of respect for women (Telfer, 2018). Compared to “Gee” by Girls’ Generation where a man staff walks around the members, in “*Ditto*” music video by NewJeans, the female gaze is pictured through a female student who records the members dancing in school rooftop that can be seen in Figure 4.

Figures 4. NewJeans - "Ditto"



Source: (HYBE LABELS, 2022).

In a focus on individualism, choice, and empowerment aspect, post feminism emphasises the desire to 'be yourself' and 'please yourself' in every woman to make themselves feel good and follow their generated desire to create a beautiful look by buying clothes or doing cosmetic procedures (Gill, 2007). The individualism and choice of women in post feminism are portrayed in how women are aware and confident of their capabilities. Thus, they can make their own decisions and have self-determination. In BLACKPINK's songs, they portray women who can take control of their lives and make decisions. Meanwhile, the "*Queencard*" by (G)I-DLE emphasises women's empowerment by explicitly singing that all women, whether thin or fat, are free to wear clothes they like confidently. The idea of individualism and empowerment from BLACKPINK's and (G)IDLE's lyrics can

be seen in the Table 2 below. Compared to SES' and Girls' Generation's songs in the Table 3, which describe women who are not confident and hardly make decisions.

Table 2. BLACKPINK's "Ddu-Du Ddu-Du" and (G)I-DLE's "Queencard" lyrics

BLACKPINK - "Ddu-Du Ddu-Du"	(G)I-DLE - "Queencard"
<p><i>Neol danggineun geotdo meolli milchineun geotdo Jemeotdaero haneun bad girl Jokeon sileohageon nuga mwora hadeon</i></p> <p>Pulling you and pushing you far away I do it however I want because I'm a bad girl Whether you like me or hate me or whatever anyone says</p>	<p><i>Amugeona geolchin girl (Girl)</i> <i>Queenca-ca-card</i> <i>Mareugeona saljjin girl (Girl)</i> <i>Queenca-ca-card</i> <i>Jasingam neomchineun girl (Girl)</i></p> <p>Wearing whatever girl (Girl) Queenca-ca-card Thin or thick girl (Girl) Queenca-ca-card Full of confidence girl (Girl)</p>

Sources: (Genius, 2018; Genius, 2023).

Table 3. SES' "(Cause) I'm Your Girl" and Girls' Generation's "Gee" lyrics.

S.E.S - "(Cause) I'm Your Girl"	Girls' Generation - "Gee"
<p><i>Get him up, get him up Mollasseo nan nan neoege isseo Geu eoneu hana jasin itge yaegi hal su eopseotdeon geot</i></p> <p>Get him up, get him up I didn't know that to you, I, I I couldn't tell you anything proudly at all</p>	<p><i>Maldo motaenneungeol Neomu bukkeureoweohaneun nan Yonggiga eomneun geolkka Eotteokaeya joeun geolkka</i></p> <p>I couldn't even say anything. I'm too embarrassed. Do I not have any courage?</p>

S.E.S - "(Cause) I'm Your Girl"	Girls' Generation - "Gee"
	What would be the right thing to do?

Sources: (Genius, 2021; Genius, 2021).

According to Gill (2007), monitoring is related to women's femininity aspects such as body posture, manner, and attire. It is vigilance on the body's surface and in women's self, particularly in emotional intelligence and communication. Therefore, the notion of an emphasis upon self-surveillance, monitoring and self-discipline reflects the hard work, evaluation, and self-discipline that women do for themselves to be better and indulge themselves. As cited in Wang (2022), K-pop girl groups monitor and evaluate various aspects, such as skill and appearance. They are trained for a long year in dancing and singing. They are trained to have the perfect attitude and communication skills before debuting and appearing in front of the cameras. In the (G)I-DLE's music video as shown in Figure 5, Miyeon is portrayed as monitoring her appearance by looking at the mirror that depicts the self-surveillance of women.

Figures 5. (G)I-DLE - "Queencard"



Source: ((G)I-DLE, 2023).

The next aspect of post feminism as sensibility is the dominance of a makeover paradigm where the media try to tell people what they lack in their life, especially women, and then provide relationship or lifestyle advice, followed by the transformation process (Gill, 2007). According to Yoon and Kim (2020), a makeover can be done by applying makeup, changing appearance, or performing cosmetic procedures such as plastic surgery. The implementation of cosmetic surgery aims to increase the overall pleasure of arrival, where self-monitoring attitudes have a positive effect. In this regard, the dominance of a makeover paradigm is depicted in (G)I-DLE's "*Queencard*" music video in Figure 6, where Soyeon was in the operating room undergoing plastic surgery to have a makeover of her appearance.

Figures 6. (G)I-DLE - "Queencard"



Source: ((G)I-DLE, 2023).

According to Gill (2007), the notion of the reassertion of sexual difference nourished the sexual difference between men and women. In this regard, K-pop girl groups are aware of female sexuality, which is different from males and take advantage by emphasising their femininity. In K-pop girl group songs from the first generation until the fourth generation, the reassertion of sexual differences is explicitly described through the song lyrics by mentioning the word 'girl' or 'yeoja', which means girl or woman in Korean, which can be seen in the Table 4 and Table 5 below.

Table 4. S.E.S' "(Cause) I'm Your Girl" and Girls' Generation's "Gee" lyrics.

S.E.S - "(Cause) I'm Your Girl"	Girls' Generation - "Gee"
<i>Nareul mideo jugil barae hamkke isseo 'Cause I'm your girl, hold me baby</i>	<i>Aha, listen boy My first love story My angel and my girls</i>
Hoping that you trust me, together with me	Aha, listen boy My first love story My angel and my girl

S.E.S - “(Cause) I’m Your Girl”	Girls' Generation - “Gee”
'Cause I'm your girl, hold me baby	

Sources: (Genius, 2021; Genius, 2021).

Table 5. BLACKPINK's “Ddu-Du Ddu-Du” and (G)I-DLE's “Queencard” lyrics

BLACKPINK - “Ddu-Du Ddu-Du”	(G)I-DLE - “Queencard”
<p><i>Neol danggineun geotdo meolli milchineun geotdo Jemeotdaero haneun bad girl</i></p> <p>Pulling you and pushing you far away I do it however I want because I'm a bad girl</p>	<p><i>Oh, jeogi eonnyadeul nae fashioneul ttara hane Areumdaun yeojai haruneun da areumdamne</i></p> <p>Oh, the ladies over there copy my fashion A beautiful woman's day is entirely beautiful</p>

Sources: (Genius, 2018; Genius, 2023).

Goldman (1992, as cited in Gill, 2007) addressed that irony is used for advertising by flattering the audience as consumers because they have succeeded in 'seeing through' in media. By showing irony and knowingness, K-pop idols want to share their stories and give a sense of knowingness to their fans, who are considered friends. K-pop girl groups as women also show their emotional side and talk about their desire to be individuals who dare to be against oppression (Chang, 2020). As shown in Figure 7 from BLACKPINK's "Ddu-Du Ddu-Du" music video, Jisoo walks with pink hair and an eccentric appearance among people in suits who are taking photos

of Jisoo, who looks perfect, which indicates that Jisoo is trying to fight the male gaze by being unique and not in accordance with traditional femininity. However, when Jisoo stands up after falling, all the cameras focus on her in a pistol-like position. This circumstance conveys the irony of K-pop idols by suggesting that when K-pop girl groups make mistakes, people will notice and attack them through cyberbullying.

Figures 7. BLACKPINK - “Ddu-Du Ddu-Du”



Source: (BLACKPINK, 2018).

The construction of the notion of feminism indicates that this discourse has become a part of culture and public consumption by being broadcasted in the media. In BLACKPINK's "Ddu-Du Ddu-Du" music video, the four members sit on thrones, as shown in Figure 8. The throne indicates the existence of power and strength in the people who occupy it, as well as having the law of control (Isabel, Rooselinda, Harrianto, & Tolosa, 2022). Thus, it can be concluded that in the cut of the music video clip, BLACKPINK is a girl group consisting of

strong women who have the law of control over themselves and can rule the world. Meanwhile, in (G)I-DLE's "*Queencard*" music videos, the reconstruction of feminism is depicted in a part where women are free and fully autonomous to make decisions, such as choosing clothes to buy or carrying out cosmetic procedures to beautify themselves.

Figures 8. BLACKPINK - "Ddu-Du Ddu-Du"



Source: (BLACKPINK, 2018).

Based on the analysis above, the shifting from the male gaze to the female gaze in K-pop girl groups mainly occurred through the shifting from objectification to subjectification of women, focusing on individualism, choice, empowerment, irony, and knowingness in media. The first and second generations of K-pop girl groups depicted the women figure as objects who followed the patriarchal gender roles and traditional femininity due to the lack of women's participation in the industry and creative process. However, with the shift to

the female gaze, K-pop girl groups and fans can criticise societal gender issues, realise women's desires, and help them find their identities and feelings (Chang, 2020). The female gaze in the media means that women can see themselves as subjects with self-confidence, quality, capability, and freedom to act based on each woman's perspective.

The Shifting from the Male Gaze to the Female Gaze in Korean Pop Girl Groups as The Impact of #MeToo Movement in South Korea as TAN

The shifting from the male gaze to the female gaze in K-pop girl groups follows a notion from post feminism, where the shifting from objectification to subjectification of women is happening. Therefore, it can be concluded that the shifting from the male gaze to the female gaze of girl groups is a form of post feminism in the K-pop industry.

Post feminism allows popular media to portray complex and distinct female characters, even though they have similar femininity (Lotz, 2001). The post feminism in popular media, marked by the shifting from the male gaze to the female gaze in K-pop girl groups, makes women idols able to portray their complex characteristics that are

in accordance with the explore the diverse relations to power women inhabit attribute. In K-pop girl groups, the female gaze is shown through the music videos and song lyrics through the irony of K-pop girl groups, which indicates the unique and complex image of female characters. BLACKPINK wanted to show their fans the characteristics of women who are full of confidence, have a strong mentality and are aware of their capabilities that are not following the concept of women in the male gaze.

In the depictions of varied feminist solutions and organisations of activism attribute, post feminism in popular media is often indicated with the description of feminist solutions or provides feminist views of the conditions that oppress women to the audiences (Lotz, 2001). As the #MeToo movement can increase public awareness of gender inequality, the role of K-pop girl groups is to communicate their empowering voices and give solutions for women in a more substantial and positive way. BLACKPINK's "*Ddu-Du Ddu-Du*", released in the middle of the #MeToo movement in South Korea, conveys women's empowerment messages where women are encouraged to act according to their desire and capabilities against the oppression women receive in this modern era (Isabel,

Rooselinda, Harrianto, & Tolosa, 2022). In addition, (G)I-DLE's song, "*Queencard*", provides women empowerment messages by encouraging self-love and confidence in a society that prioritises appearance.

Furthermore, the #MeToo movement also increases the awareness of individuality and sexuality issues, which were initially considered closed and shameful (Kim & Chang, 2021). In this regard, K-pop women idols communicate women's voices by portraying strong and confident women concepts that make their female fans look up to them for a sister figure named a girl crush in a platonic way. For example, the idea of strong and confident women by BLACKPINK and (G)I-DLE breaks patriarchal values, opening acceptance for sexual diversity (Lee & Yi, 2020). It is under the third attribute of deconstructing binary categories of gender and sexuality, instead viewing these categories as flexible and indistinct.

The #MeToo movement in South Korea unveiled the struggles of women because of the patriarchal system. As the gaze shifts to the female gaze, K-pop girl groups as idols and women can now portray women's struggles and give their perspectives through song lyrics and music videos. In their song "*Ddu-Du Ddu-Du*", BLACKPINK displays

the character of women who act against traditional stereotypes of femininity by being confident and independent and showing their talents (Isabel, Rooselinda, Harrianto, & Tolosa, 2022). From (G)I-DLE's "Queencard" song and music video, they portrayed the struggles of women with insecurities; thus, as their solution, (G)I-DLE's members do makeup to please themselves and have fun with friends as a form of women empowerment. Meanwhile, in NewJeans' "Ditto" music videos, the situation and struggle displayed is the feeling of loneliness. Hence, their solution is to record their memories of having fun with friends and confess their feelings to someone they like. Those three girl groups follow the way situations illustrate the contemporary struggles faced by women, and feminists are raised and examined within a series of attributes (Lotz, 2001). Compared to the songs and music videos from SES and Girls' Generation that were created to cater for the male gaze, the problem and struggle described are women who fall in love with a man and do not know how to express it without providing solutions to make women confident about their feelings.

CONCLUSION

As a feminist movement, the #MeToo movement in South Korea unveiled the gender gap in South Korea by bringing women concurrently to speak up about sexual harassment and violence cases they had experienced and demand any changes. The #MeToo movement in South Korea brought the differences of people in viewing sexual abuse and harassment cases. Also, it gave victims, who are mostly women, a platform to speak about their experiences. The #MeToo movement also made South Korea more responsive in dealing with sexual harassment and assault cases, which unveiled the Burning Sun scandal, which was a sexual harassment scandal in the K-pop industry involving popular K-pop male idols. As the movement affected many young Korean women, the K-pop industry of young women created progressive changes, marked by the shifting from the male gaze to the female gaze in K-pop girl groups. In analysing five K-pop girl groups by using Rosalind Gill's concept of post feminism, the shifting from male gaze to female gaze in K-pop girl groups occurred by the shifting from objectification to subjectification, also by showing a focus on individualism, choice, and empowerment of women as well as by depicting irony and give the sense of

knowingness to the audience. The shift from the male gaze to the female gaze in K-pop girl groups allows members of K-pop girl groups to express themselves and display the image of women who are active, confident, and independent. As the shifting from the male gaze to the female gaze in K-pop girl groups is a form of post feminism in the K-pop industry, post feminism makes K-pop girl groups able to portray complex and distinct characters as women as well as provide their perspectives of feminism and gender equality in popular media.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the impact of the #MeToo movement, as TAN, created awareness of gender inequality in South Korea, which was marked by a high rate of sexual harassment cases. As the #MeToo activists in South Korea advocate the movement to achieve their goal, it also impacted the K-pop industry, which can be seen from the shifting from the male gaze to the female gaze in the current generation of K-pop girl groups. In addition, the #MeToo movement has also been able to create changes in Korean society, where people have started to accept K-pop girl groups who show their perspective of women empowerment and have an attitude against traditional femininity formed by patriarchy.

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