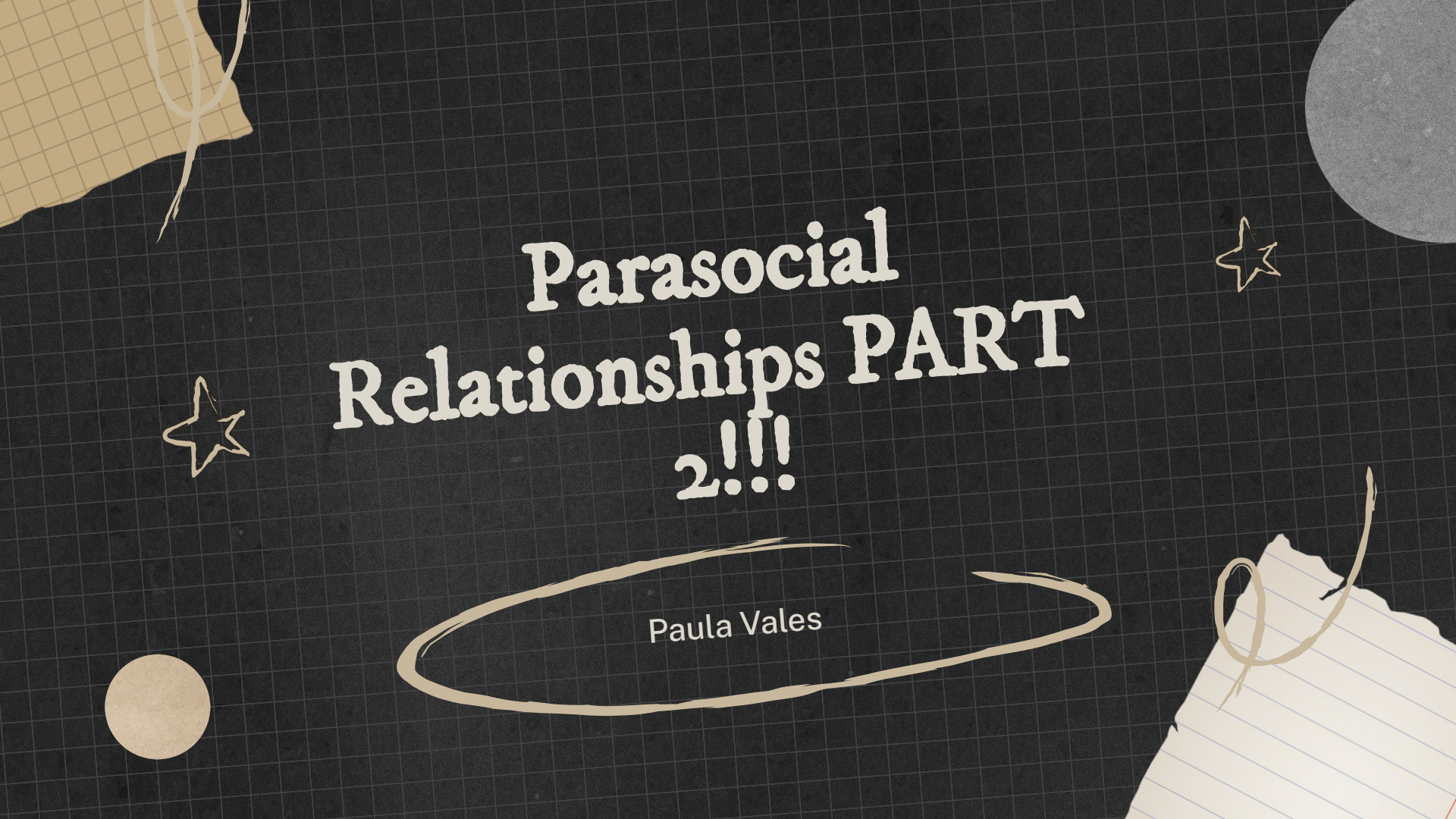




Parasocial Relationships PART 2!!!

Paula Vales

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The background is a dark gray grid. In the top left, there is a piece of torn, light brown paper with a white scribble. In the top right, there is a piece of torn, white paper with blue horizontal lines and a white scribble. A small, hand-drawn white star is in the top center. In the bottom left, there is a solid light brown circle. In the bottom right, there is a solid dark gray circle.

Recapitulate on PSRs

Previously

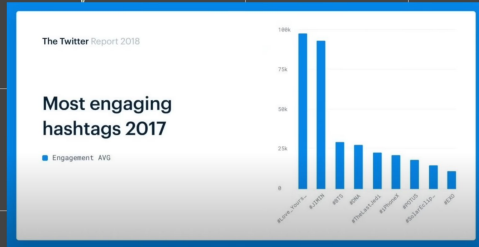
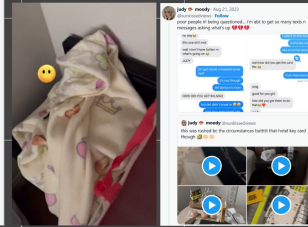


Figure shows the trending tags in Twitter across the world in 2017. The top 4 are all BTS related and shows how dedicated some of these fans are.

In August of 2023, a stalker (saesang) broke into an NCT's hotel suite during the US NCT tour and recorded the entire crime on video as well as uploaded it on Twitter.

After other fans had watched the video, they noticed that the pajamas in the video were the same ones the idol had worn in the official NCT channel.

Sasaeng - a term in Korea for obsessive fans that overstep their boundaries and invade a celebrity's personal life.

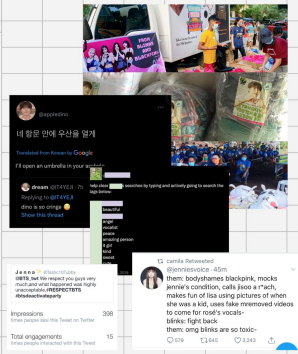


Barely scratched the surface on the Korean entertainment industry and gave a definition of PSRs.

Fancom - Is a system in which the fans manage their idol's growth so that they flourish and reach other audiences.

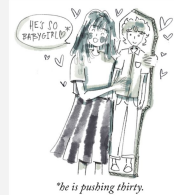
They participate in fundraising and charity work to make sure their idol's image is enhanced.

Fancom practices include fans feeling compelled to police the content on social media, especially if it risks the idol's image. They will spam certain keywords to trick the algorithm to make the keywords trend instead of the scandal. (Aini, 2023)



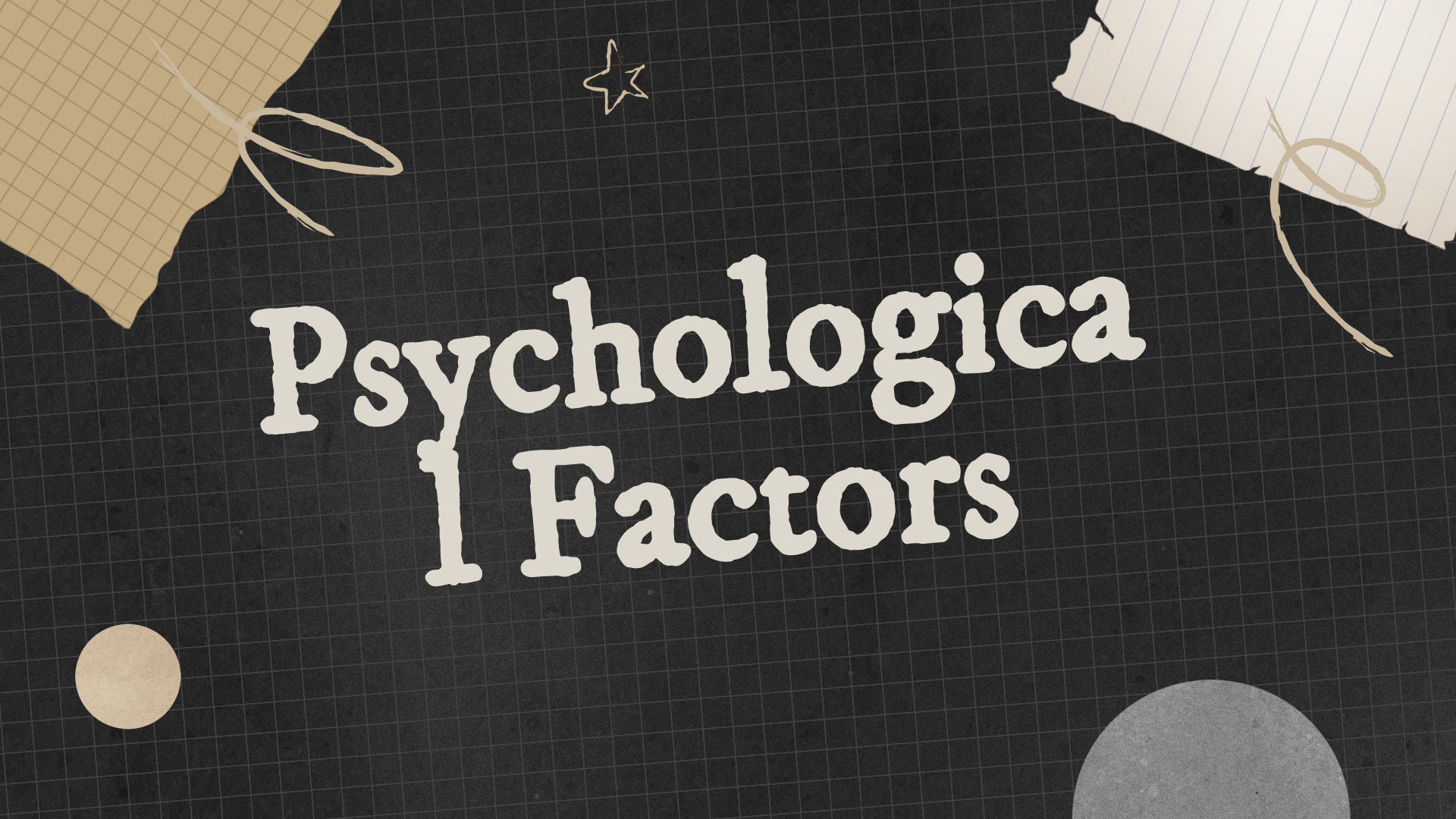
Parasocial Relationships

And its consequences

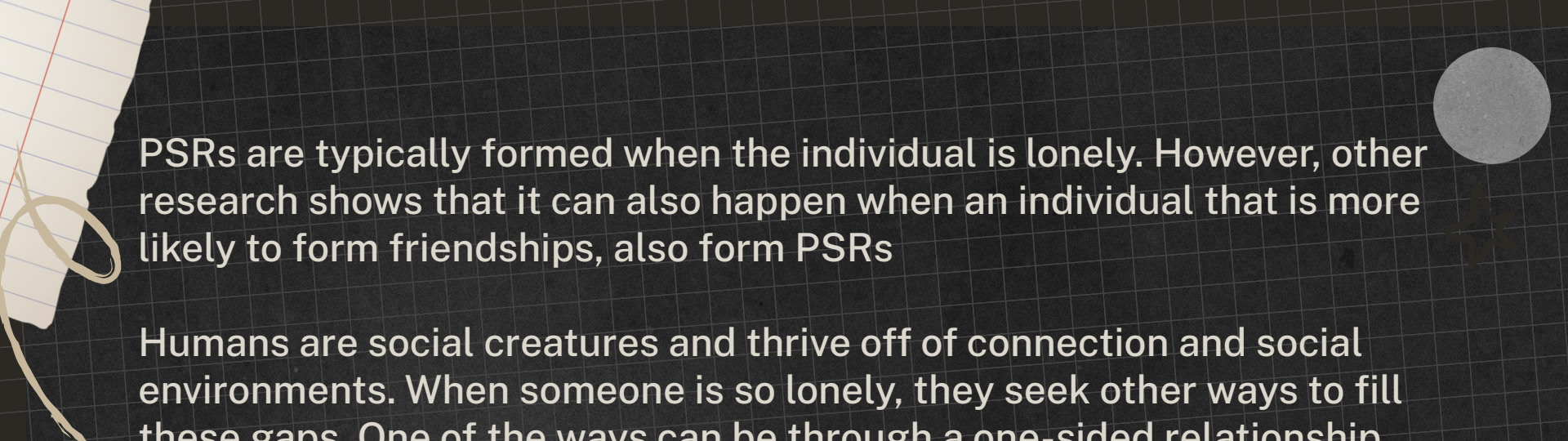


Parasocial relationships

It is a one sided relationship in which one person develops a strong sense of connection, intimacy or familiarity with someone they don't know. These are mostly celebrities or internet figures. (Psychology Today Staff, 2025)



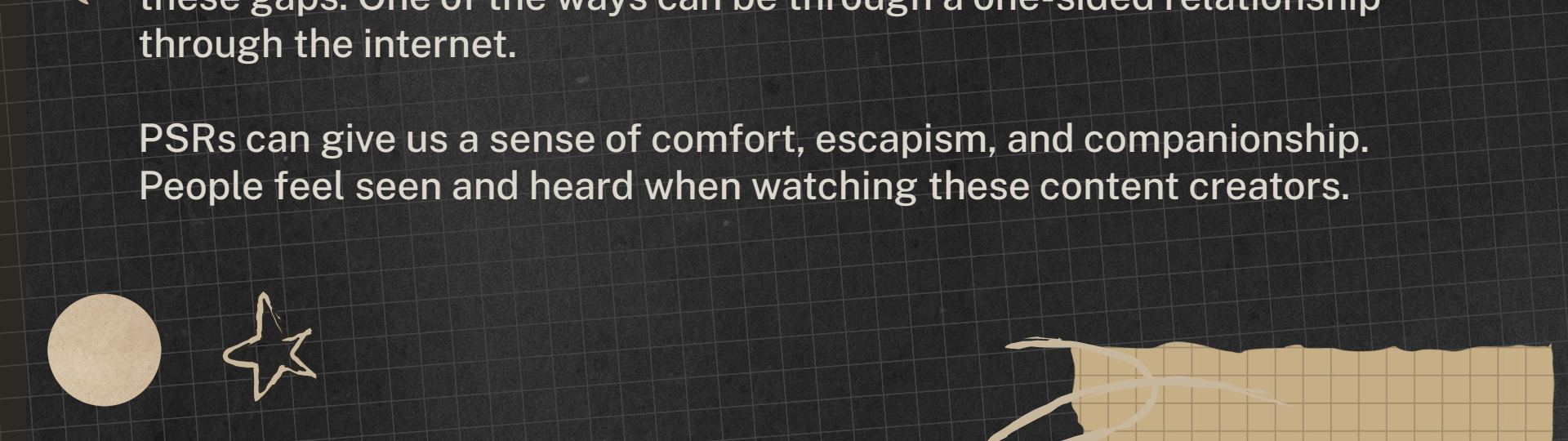
Psychological 1 Factors

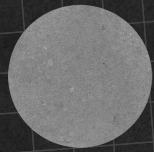


PSRs are typically formed when the individual is lonely. However, other research shows that it can also happen when an individual that is more likely to form friendships, also form PSRs

Humans are social creatures and thrive off of connection and social environments. When someone is so lonely, they seek other ways to fill these gaps. One of the ways can be through a one-sided relationship through the internet.

PSRs can give us a sense of comfort, escapism, and companionship. People feel seen and heard when watching these content creators.

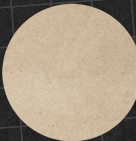




Through constant exposure to media such as Youtube, Twitch, and Tiktok where content creators share details about their life, fans feel like they know the creator personally.

The content creator speaks to the camera with direct eye contact and shares stories of their past or snippets of their life. It feels as if a friend is talking to us. This tricks our brains into thinking that the interaction with this stranger is very real.

Although the illusion feels comforting, the boundary between reality and fiction becomes undecipherable.



Ups and Downs

Ups

- Comfort, escapism
- A study shows that PSRs reduce the stigma of mental conditions
- Bonding with creators or celebs may form/shift morals.

Downs

- They won't love you back
- They might contribute to the loneliness you already feel
- They might have a negative influence on you



Cultural & Sociological Factors

Collectivist and Individualist

The difference between individualism and collectivism is whether you think of yourself to be independent or someone that is interconnected with other members of society, usually favouring the collective rather than yourself.

Culturally, people in Eastern Asian cultures share a collectivist mindset and live in collectivist societies.

Collectivist societies like Japan, Korea and China, PSRs offer an individual a feeling of belonging and loyalty. On the other hand, individualist societies fulfill the individuals self expression as well as independence.

Hikikomori

A hikikomori is a word used in Japan to describe someone who withdraw themselves from society. They avoid going outside years at a time and they keep interacting with others at a minimal or none at all. A government survey has found out that 1.57% of the population (although it is speculated that there are more) are hikikomoris. This condition was thought to have only affected the Japanese but is slowly making its way to neighbouring countries such as South Korea.

Since hikikomoris are some of the most isolated people in collectivist societies, their circumstances creates perfect breeding grounds for parasocial relationships.



Oshikatsu

Oshikatsu is a term with Japanese origins. Oshi (押し) meaning favourite character or idol and katsu (活) meaning activity or endeavour. In essence, oshikatsu is the action of supporting your favourite idol. This culture encompasses what ever a normal fan does to show their engagement and appreciation to their idol. These activities include, buying their merchandise, showing up to their events and expressing their love in tangible and appropriate ways.

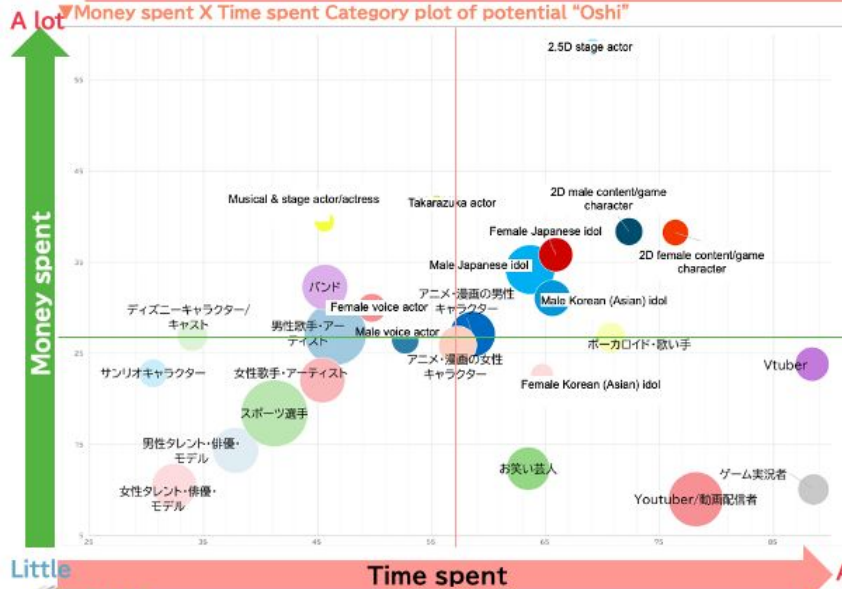
This is a culture where money is **HEAVILY** involved

How serious are "Oshikatsu" activities?

- ✓ Those who spend relatively more money and time are those who support **idols, 2D characters, and 2.5D stage actors.**
- ✓ Those who spend relatively more money are those who support stage-related persons, **bands/artists, voice actors, and Disney-related persons.**
- ✓ By crossing the amount of money spent on "Oshikatsu" and the time spent on "Oshikatsu," the level of "Oshikatsu" activities is divided into four, and defined into different "Oshikatsu levels."

SURVEY

LOG



▼ Definition of "Oshikatsu" levels

		Time spent (Average per day)			
		Under 30 min.	30 min. – 59 min.	1 hour – 2 hour 59 min.	3 hours & over
Money spent (1 month)	I haven't spent any money	LIGHT			
	Under JPY 3,000		MIDDLE		
	JPY 3,000 – JPY 9,999			HEAVY	
	JPY 10,000 & over				SUPER HEAVY

▼ Composition ratio of "Oshikatsu" levels

		Composition ratio			
		■ SUPERHEAVY	■ HEAVY	■ MIDDLE	■ LIGHT
All people who have an "Oshi"	n = 15,113	10.4	14.7	20.6	54.3

Survey shows that fans that spend more money and more time on their oshis, they are considered "heavy fans"

Gachikoi

Gachikoi (がちこい) is a slang used in Japan for someone that develops strong feelings, mainly romantic, for their oshi. Gachi (真実) meaning serious and koi (恋) meaning love, this word quite literally means serious love. It was a term made by fans, for fans. Some gachikois have the mentality of "any attention, is good attention, as long as it's for my favourite"

Often, they will try to dictate other fans how to act, but this is out of superiority rather than authority. Their logic is that if they've spent a lot of money on their oshi, their love is the "most pure".





Economic Factors

Money and accessibility

Money plays a major role into the global economy. Spaces like the K-pop fandoms and Youtube, rely on the parasocial emotional bonds for creators and idols to make a profit.

Generally, when someone feels connected to an idol or influencer, they will want to spend more money on them to show their appreciation and dedication. This includes concert ticket, merch, or stream donations.

As previously said with oshi culture, the more money you spend on your oshi, the more devoted you are to your idol.



Inequality in fandoms

However, not all fans have much money to spend on their favourite idol/influencer. In fan cultures especially, depending on how much you are willing to spend, access to these creators become harder.

Those who are lucky enough to afford super expensive VIP tickets , memberships, or exclusive content feel a more intense sense of closeness. Fans with less money aren't able to purchase these merchandises are often left feeling more distant

Women on platforms and PSI

Social media platforms such as Twitch and Only Fans are hot spots for parasocial interaction. Tipping and donations often lead to parasocial engagement. This can create a false sense of reciprocity and actual interaction. With these features on platforms, it gives viewers a way for a direct “conversation”.

That being said, now more than ever, women have been stalked and harassed through these platforms.

Examples

Twitch streamer had her car set on fire
because a fan found out she had a
boyfriend



Emiru recently got assaulted in
Twitchcon. A man tried to kiss her
but failed



This shows that some of these fans have a very entitled mindset.
"Because I donated to her I am allowed to do this etc."



Ethical Concerns

Idols & idols that are minors

As the K-pop industry continues to flourish, this means there are more competition to stand out. Aside from rigorous training before debut, idols still need to put in the effort to maintain their skills and appearance. However, this comes at a cost

When idols are pressured by both companies and public eye, this creates an unsafe and toxic environment for one's health. There have been multiple instances of idols fainting on stage and taking breaks due to injuries or mental health issues.



This industry is also pumping out idols that have rarely experienced teenage years, which does come into question of, are they developed enough to be in such a toxic environment.



(All of these girls are 14 in the pics)

THANKS

