

THE INFLUENCE OF K-POP THAI FAN LOYALTY ON THE IMAGE OF KOREAN MALE IDOL:  
A CASE STUDY OF LIM YOUNGMIN



A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts in Korean Studies (Interdisciplinary Program)

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ณัฐนนท วงศ์สันติเมธ : อิทธิพลของความจงรักภักดีของกลุ่มแฟนคลับชาวไทยที่มีต่อ  
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 STUDY OF LIM YOUNGMIN) อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก : ผศ. ดร.กมล บุชบรรณ

ศิลปินเคป็อปบอยแบนด์ เอบีซีเอส (AB6IX) จากประเทศเกาหลีใต้ อิมยองมิน ได้ครองใจ  
 แฟนคลับชาวไทยที่พัฒนาจนเป็นแฟนคลับที่มีความจงรักภักดีต่อเขา ถึงแม้ว่าอิมยองมินจะต้อง  
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 เข้ารับการเกณฑ์ทหารซึ่งเป็นสิ่งที่พลเมืองชายสัญชาติเกาหลีใต้ทุกคนจะต้องปฏิบัติโดยไม่มี  
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 คลับที่มีความจงรักภักดีเหล่านี้เกิดความพึงพอใจจากกิจกรรมที่อิมยองมินได้ปฏิบัติสั่งสมมาจนมี  
 ความมั่นใจที่จะสนับสนุนอิมยองมินต่อไป วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้จะวิเคราะห์ปัจจัยที่ส่งผลต่อความพึง  
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Nattanon Wongsantimeth : THE INFLUENCE OF K-POP THAI FAN LOYALTY  
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Advisor: Asst. Prof. KAMON BUTSABAN, Ph.D.

K-pop boyband artist AB6IX from South Korea, Lim Youngmin, has won the hearts of Thai fans that have developed into loyalty to him. However, Lim Youngmin has faced situations that affected the artist's idol image, and this resulted in the inability of performing as an artist in the meantime, from an incident in 2020, after being arrested for DUI - driving under the influence of alcohol. He had his driving license revoked in the same year which might force him to decide to enlist himself in the military, which is a requirement for all male citizens of South Korea without exception. All the situations fans have faced are proof that they are loyal fans and are satisfied by the activities that Lim Youngmin has accumulated thus having the confidence to support Lim Youngmin. Furthermore, this thesis will analyze the factors that affect the satisfaction of loyal fans through two methods. Firstly, an in-depth interview with two fans, namely a Twitter fan page administrator and a loyal fan of Youngmin for over five years. Secondly, by analyzing the results of the answers from a fan questionnaire taken by 400 people. This research is likely to open up more or less perspectives on fans' loyalty toward artists.

Field of Study: Korean Studies

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Nattanon Wongsantimeth

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Since, the K-Pop culture has spread from South Korea all over the world and has been seen in Thailand since 1992 from a South Korean group called Seo Taiji and Boys Suvittawatt (2022). Thai society has been deeply influenced by the phenomenon of K-pop over the years. South Korean idols, particularly in the K-pop industry, face immense pressure to maintain a positive image that is closely tied to their popularity, work, and overall public perception. This is crucial for retaining their fan base and sustaining their success. The journey to becoming an idol involves rigorous auditions, training, and the constant need to uphold a positive image that satisfies the fans. However, male idols face a significant interruption in their careers due to mandatory military enlistment in South Korea, which is determined by their age. As a result, their idol activities come to a temporary halt during this period. Furthermore, an idol's image is subject to change based on various circumstances and factors. Any involvement in illegal activities can have significant implications for their image and reputation.

This research focuses specifically on the case study of Lim Youngmin, who embarked on his idol journey in 2012 and reached the pinnacle of his career as the leader of the boy group "AB6IX" in 2019. However, an incident occurred that caused a temporary suspension of his idol activities, leading to his enlistment in the military. The main objective of this research is to explore the major influences on Thai fans' loyalty and support for Lim Youngmin, despite his conviction for drunk driving (DUI). Additionally, the research aims to investigate the factors that contribute to Thai fans' unwavering support and their willingness to wait for Youngmin's discharge from the military, even though he is no longer the leader of AB6IX. This investigation is conducted through in-depth interviews with a long-term fan of Youngmin and a fan

who serves as a moderator for Youngmin's main fan club Twitter account. Furthermore, a survey is conducted to gather fan opinions and perspectives. The findings obtained through these qualitative and quantitative methods are analyzed and supported by relevant literature reviews to gain a comprehensive understanding of the variables that influence Youngmin's image and Thai fan loyalty.

This research delves into the influences that shape the loyalty of K-pop Thai fans towards Lim Youngmin, despite the legal issues he faced, and seeks to uncover the factors that contribute to fans' ongoing support. By employing a combination of qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys, the study collects valuable data that is then analyzed and reinforced by existing literature, thereby shedding light on the complex dynamics that impact Youngmin's image and the loyalty of his fans.

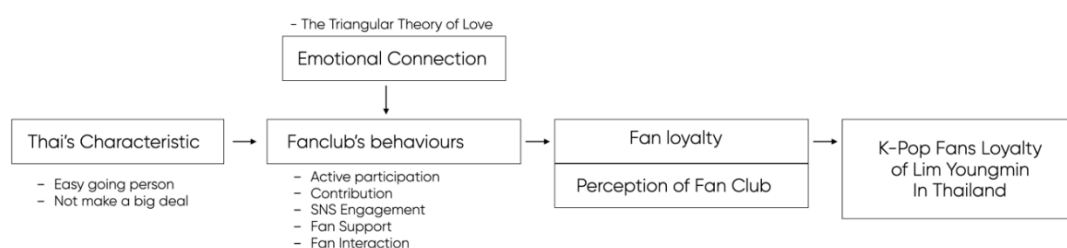
### 1.1 Research Objectives

This thesis aims to examine the impact of fan loyalty on the relationship between fans and Lim Youngmin in the context of a pre-military enlistment scandal involving driving under the influence (DUI) of drugs or alcohol. The study specifically focuses on the perspective of Thai fans and a detailed analysis.

These above aims will be accomplished by the following research objectives:

1. Factors that make Thai fans continue to support Youngmin despite Youngmin constantly experiencing situations where he is incapable to work.

### 1.2 Conceptual Research Framework.



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Research Framework

The impact of Thai characteristics, specifically being easy-going, and how it relates to fan club behavior and fan loyalty in the context of K-pop, particularly in relation to Lim Youngmin's fan club in Thailand also examine the impact of emotional connection, as described by the Triangular Theory of Love, on fan club behavior and fan loyalty can be explained as follows.

1. Thai characteristic of being easy-going: May influence fan club behavior by creating a welcoming and inclusive environment within the fan club. Thai fans may exhibit a sense of camaraderie and unity, promoting active participation, collaboration, and support among fan club members.
2. Emotional connection (The Triangular Theory of Love): The emotional connection between fans and their idols can be understood through the lens of the Triangular Theory of Love, which proposes that love consists of three components: intimacy, passion, and commitment. Thai fans may develop a strong emotional connection with Lim Youngmin by feeling a sense of intimacy by sharing experiences, passions as intense admiration, excitement, and dedication towards Youngmin, while commitment reflects a long-term dedication and loyalty to him as an artist.
3. Impact on fan club behavior: The Thai characteristic of being easy-going and the emotional connection with Youngmin can influence fan club behavior. Thai fans may actively participate in fan club activities, such as attending concerts and events, engaging in online discussions, and organizing fan support projects. They may also foster interactions and connections with fellow fans and Youngmin through social media engagement, creating a supportive and interactive fan community.
4. Impact on fan loyalty: The combination of the Thai characteristic of being easy-going, emotional connection, and active fan club behavior can contribute to fan loyalty. Thai fans' positive experiences, emotional attachment, and dedication to Youngmin and the fan club may strengthen their loyalty, leading to continued support, engagement, and commitment to Youngmin's career.

5. Impact on fan perception: The collective fan club behavior, fueled by the Thai characteristic and emotional connection, can shape fan perception. Thai fans' active participation, support, and interactions can create a positive image and perception of Youngmin within the fandom. This positive perception can further enhance fan loyalty and strengthen the bond between Youngmin and his Thai fanbase.

### 1.3 Hypothesis

Thai fans exhibit a high level of satisfaction and admiration for Youngmin's talents. They have also observed his accountability and responsible behavior through his communication during various activities. Consequently, fans have chosen to maintain their support for him despite the challenges he has faced.

### 1.4 Research Question

1. What are the factor that makes Thai fans continue to support Youngmin?
2. Are there any activities of Youngmin That affect the support of Thai fans?

### 1.5 Scope of the research

This paper focuses on fangirls (Female fan club) of Lim Youngmin in Thailand and conducted both in-depth interview with fangirls (a female fan) of Lim Youngmin in Thailand, and open-ended questionnaires with 400 respondents from AB6IX's Fanclub (ABNEW)



## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEWS

According to the difference in people's perspectives, the difference is due to internal and external factors. In an attempt to analyze the influence of relationship of Fans and artists on people's perspectives. This paper has categorized existing studies in terms of topics and issues.

#### 2.1 Influence of K-pop Thai fan loyalty

##### 2.1.1 Characteristic of Thai people

Characteristic of Thai people are flexible and situation-oriented. The general attitude towards problems is: "Pen rueng lek" (it's a small matter); "Mai chai rueng kho khaad baad tai" (it is not a matter of life-and-death); or "Tuk yang kae khai kan dai" (Everything can be adjusted). The popular phrase "Kling wai korn, pho sorn wai" (Do whatever is called for at the moment, to survive) perhaps adequately depicts the flexible characteristic of the Thai people (Suntaree Komin, 1990). Moreover, Thais have been described as easy-going, friendly, self-confident, complacent, polite, laid back, discreet, modest, cheerful, neat, clean, respectful, grateful, obedient, loyal and differential (Hays, 2014). The unique personalities of Thai people can be clear as seen in sharing, being kind, and not making a big deal out of things. It shows this distinctive feature of Thai Fans as well. Every Fandom is expressed in various ways as a way of supporting, Kim and Kim (2017) showed that K-Pop fans would regularly engage with other fans in online K-Pop fan websites and groups specific to K-Pop.

##### 2.1.2 Characteristic of Thai Fanclub

According to the study of Fandom of "Fans" in Thai society from Boonyanuch Nakha (2016), described about definition of fandom that Fandom is being a group of people who admire and have passion towards anything. It could be concluded that "fandom" has been along with Thai society for long periods, and it seems to be normal for some groups of people. The wording of Fans is also used to describe

admiration in other things such as Fans of spots, Fans of music, Fans of Movies, and so on, all of these fans will provide a Fandom of any category. Boonyanuch Nakha (2016) also mentioned about the study of the level of fanclub from Lekreangsin (2008) which are conducted by 3 levels, 1. basic fan clubs who admired the artist 2. intermediate fan clubs who admired the artist and participated in responding to programs or using internet for being a part of his artist, and 3. advance fan clubs who admired the artist, use internet as the media for contacting among group members and follow this artist to some work places

On the same hand, Pitchapa Smutradontri and Savitri Gadavanij (2020) argue that Twitter is to be considered one of the most popular social media platforms in Thailand. A fan tweet is a post on Twitter by fans regarding their beloved media objective. Twitter is a platform that most of the K-pop Fanclub use to promote and spread fan projects. Therefore, an artist's relationship with a fan is a perfect form of love. It's a tight relationship, hard for anyone to destroy, and following up to support the artists. The fans do not do these things for their own personal feelings but for the happiness of the artist who is a 'perfect love' and a 'part' of their lives.

A research from Kong (2016) In Thailand, compared the popularity of a K-pop boy group against two selected best-in-class performers, One Direction and J Soul Brothers, who are drawn from the same sector – boy bands in the pop genre , the result show that in Asian regions such as Vietnam, Thailand and Taiwan, EXO is comparatively catching more attention than the other two bands, moreover , Thailand is one of the popular destinations to visit and hold a concert, according to meen.st (2562) which mentioned the statics of K-pop concerts in Thailand during a five year gap between the year of 2015 to 2018 it shows that 2018 was the golden year of K-pop concerts in Thailand which were held up to 128 times , consist of 49 concert, 33 Fan-Meeting events, 31 events and 15 business trips (all data are exempt to those of private visits). The Popularity of K-pop in Thailand can be proved by their concert tickets which had shortest selling periods in Thailand. In addition, In addition, Kstarlive.com (2018) also mentioned about tickets for EXO's 'EXO PLANET #4 – The ElyXiOn' in Thailand that all the tickets for the three days of the concert have now been sold out. Not to mention, that, it only took less than 5 minutes to sell all of

those tickets. It is in relation with (Jeong, 2016) emphasize about fandom that it is not only promoting their specific subjects , but also actively consuming them by recreating the original subject with high levels of attachment. Popular culture fans consume a specific content, artist, and/or text of mass-produced popular cultural contents in their daily lives. When the fans collect the specific chosen subjects of their idols, and share common cultural tastes with each other, the fans can build a fandom and kinship.

It is clearly show how important Thailand and Thai Fans are in the K-pop industry it also can show how much Thai Fans enjoy participating and consuming K-pop events. From all of above it shows an importance of Fanclubs, and especially Thai Fans in K-pop industries. Thus, this paper has an interest to study how effects of enrolment in Military Conscription of K-pop male idols effect to Thai Fan's behavior in terms of support and other variables, this paper also aims to study the roles of Military Conscription that effect to K-pop male idols activities and group performances. However, the influence of Thai culture plays a significant role in shaping the notable attributes of Thai fans, including their inherent kindness. Thai society is known for its emphasis on compassion and benevolence. Consequently, the majority of Thai fans exhibit a willingness to grant artists a second chance when incidents arise that negatively impact their image or work. These cultural characteristics foster a forgiving attitude among Thai fans, prompting them to readily offer artists an opportunity for redemption and reestablishment.

### **2.1.3 State of relationship**

The need to support someone would not be spontaneous without some kind of interaction or factor that creates a sense of belonging and harmony. Personal experience or some events contribute to the development of solid relationships, including having common feelings or being a part of each other. That's because chemicals in the brain handle mood and feeling, which can cause change at any time. Sternberg (1986) has studied and described three elements of relationships that

can cause love, known as the Triangular Theory of Love, which consists of Intimacy, Passion, and Commitment.

First, Intimacy refers to feelings of closeness, connectedness, and bondedness in loving relationships. When both parties have a relationship together for a while. which is one of the essential elements that are the building blocks of every relationship. In the case of a relationship between Fanclub and artist, Mendez (2021) mentioned on the website Elitedaily.com that Many K-pop artists are usually giving a fandom name to represent the fandom, normally all those fandom names are linked with the meaning of Group or Artist name. Fandom names make fans feel connected. Often, they're related to the artist's name, or they reference a special song by them. Knowing the backstory behind each makes you feel like you're in on a very cool secret. For example, EXO has a fandom name is EXO-L which L stands for Love and located between K and M in the alphabet, BLACKPINK has a fandom name is BLINK which is a combination of "Black" and "Pink.", AB6IX has a fandom name is ABNEW which mean A sixth member that will become one with AB6IX and walk a new path with them together.

Second, Passion refers to the drives that lead to romance, physical attraction, sexual consummation, and related phenomena in loving relationships. In the case of a relationship between Fanclub and artist, Lin (2020), staff writer from kpopmap.com mentioned about the strength of K-pop that contributes to making fans feel consistent with idol groups, which the Western music scene doesn't have much of in modern times such as characters, the stage performances, the synchronized choreography, etc. Moreover, K-Pop does well in storytelling and focused heavily on fan participation. Lastly, they use social media and streaming to spread like wildfire with contents and fan buzzes being spread globally.

Finally, Commitment, in the short-term, to the decision that one loves a certain other, and in the long-term, to one's commitment to keep that love. In the

case of a relationship between Fanclub and the artist, this can be explained by the duration of being a fan. The more time spent together the more they have trust.

Including various situations that help build confidence with each other. Causing trust and willingness to continue to support artists. For example, it is well known that despite being an artist who made illustriousness for South Korea a lot, if the artist is a male and has South Korean citizenship Must enlist in the military without exception at the age of maturity. At the same time, the fans themselves are still stable. And waiting for the day that the artist will be discharged to return to perform in the role of being an idol again, in the meantime, they send a message. Do activities together Including supporting the works and activities of the group that the other members are continuing. Therefore, it may be shown that the strong bond of fans Contributes to making artists still popular and able to return to work after being discharged from military service.

## **2.2 K-Pop as a National Brand**

### **2.2.1 Significant of South Korean policy**

the South Korean government's policy support for the K-pop industry has been vital in elevating it to a prominent branding and a key player in the country's export sector through various policies and initiatives, the government has actively promoted and nurtured the growth of K-pop on a global scale. Butsaban (2023) mentioned about The Korean government's vision and role that play an important factor for Korea to secure its position as a cultural powerhouse through the Korean Wave. the South Korean government to promote and nurture the growth of K-pop. It investigates the strategies, regulations, and financial support provided by the government to enhance the competitiveness of the industry in the global market. The study analyzes the impact of these policies on the success and international recognition of K-pop, highlighting the government's role in shaping and propelling the industry's growth.

### 2.2.2 Brand Loyalty

Brand Loyalty reflects the commitment consumers have with a brand. It is the most important component of brand equity because if consumers do not see the difference of the product. It will be a reason for consumers to decide to buy other brands but if consumers have a high level of brand loyalty, consumers will continue to buy products. This leads to repeat purchases by consumers (Aaker, 1991). Almeida-Santana and Moreno-Gil (2018) also emphasized Brand Loyalty as the commitment that a consumer makes to purchase a product or service again in the future, resulting in repeat purchases. Or buy products consistently over a long period of time and continuously. the attitude of Brand Loyalty level which defined by Oliver (1999) consists of three levels. 1. Satisfaction with the brand element, which is Beliefs. 2. Feelings of satisfaction towards a product or service, which means attitude and lastly, A strong intention to buy everything related to the produce. So, the idea of loyalty is the link between widely accepted attitudes and behavior.

However, the nature of Brand's fan loyalty towards South Korean artists may diverge from loyalty observed in the business landscape. The loyalty formed between fans and South Korean artists encompasses various factors, including emotional connections and impressions derived from engaging in activities without expecting reciprocation. These elements contribute to the unique and multifaceted nature of fan loyalty within the context of South Korean artists.

### 2.2.3 Fanclub and Behavior of Fanclub

To be able to explain the behavior of being a fan. We, therefore, need to mention the factors that contribute to creating an impression or attraction that could develop a deep relationship that creates a strong enough connection to support artists of their own interest. In the case of fans who attract their favorite artists or an artist who can attract fans can be explained by one of the rules of the Law of Attraction which is like attract like. Mendez (2021) Mentioned about *Law of*

*attraction* theory that everyone has the power to control what comes into your life, whether positive or negative. In the same way as Scott (2022) mentioned that It is based on the belief that thoughts are a form of energy and that positive energy attracts success in all areas of life, including health, finances, and relationships. Law of attraction is consisted with 3 laws as Elizabeth mentioned which are Like attract like, Nature abhors a vacuum, and the present is always perfect.

### **2.3 The Image of K-pop idol towards incident**

The spread of 'Hallyu' is not only an indicator of the success of cultural diplomacy on the part of South Korea's government alone. The cultural hybridity also helps 'Hallyu' to be widespread, where the international community would accept the foreign culture, like Korean culture as part of their lifestyle (Pramadya & Oktaviani, 2016). One of the main factors that make Hallyu more widely exported is from Korean pop music. Martin Roll (2021) mentioned that, the main players in the success of Hallyu have been the Korean stars like Yonsama, BoA and others. These celebrities have emerged as regional superstars with major companies – local and international – choosing them as their endorsers. In the part of K-pop star idol, Saeji (2019) mentioned that K-pop idols are again under pressure to maintain a pristine and apolitical image, even while their every move is dissected by fans and media. The contract of K-pop idol is specified with the company in order to maintain the image and maintain their popularity. In the same way of the study by Butsaban (2019) that examine the impact of K-pop Thai idols, Specifically, focusing on BLACKPINK's Lisa, on the perception of Thai people and multicultural families among Koreans. The study aims to explore how Lisa's presence and success as a Thai member of the internationally renowned K-pop group BLACKPINK influences the Korean public's perception of Thai individuals and multicultural families. The research seeks to shed light on the social and cultural implications of Lisa's

prominence in the K-pop industry, and how it may contribute to shaping attitudes and understanding towards Thai people and multiculturalism in South Korea.

On the other hand, if there is an event that negatively affects their image such as rumors, about the artist acting violently, or breaking the law. The agency will have different ways of dealing with that incident. For example, Kim (2017) mentioned Netizen's Reactions towards the DUI incident of K-pop star in a case study of, Thai K-Pop idols, Nichkhun's DUI incident on July, 2012 result came out very negative even when he was the first generation of male K-pop idols. However, in 2016, such comments are almost nonexistent and even when they are made, they receive very few likes and most of the criticism made, now take an objective standpoint to treat the DUI incident itself. Another case study of a Korean K-pop idol, Heo Chan, a member of the K-pop boy band Victon, Heo Chan has temporarily been removed from the group's future activities after being investigated for drunk driving by the group's agency IST Entertainment and all of his activities have been taken down from all channel (Lee Gyu-lee, 2022)



## CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 The Taro Yamane formular

To find the sample size of this study. The sample size can be calculated by using **The Taro Yamane** formular to scope number of sample size of this study as follow.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Figure 2: Taro Yamane formular

n = sample size, N = population size, e = confidence (0.05)

Due to group of population of the research, Fan club of Lim Youngmin according to followers from Twitter Fanbase account, @YOUNGMIN\_TH, total of follower (data on date 19 Jan 2022) 23,676 followers.

Substitute numbers in formula:

$$n = \frac{23676}{1 + 23676(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 393.354$$

The study employed the Yamane formula to determine a sample size of 393.354 individuals. However, the sample size was increased to 400 participants to ensure reliable data. In-depth interviews were conducted with the administrators of Lim Youngmin's fanbase Twitter account, @YOUNGMIN\_TH, and loyal members of the Fanclub from Thailand, providing valuable insights into fan perspectives.

### 3.2 Data Collection by Questionnaire

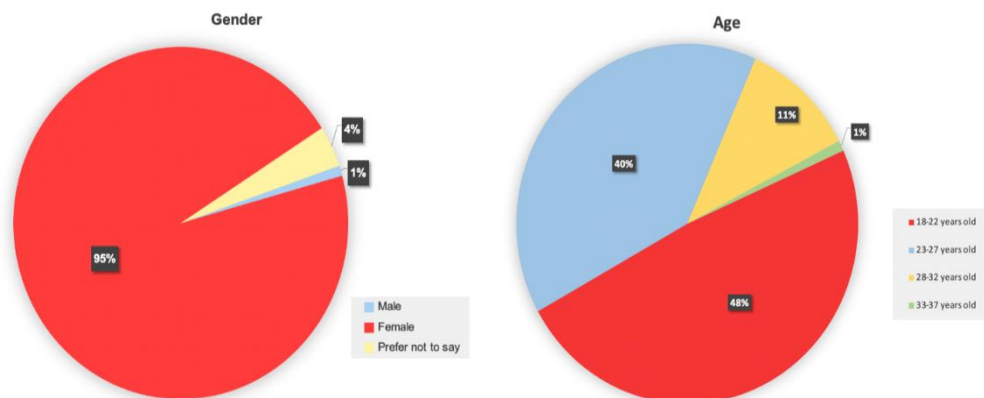


Figure 3: Result of Gender and Age

The online survey conducted using Google Forms collected 400 responses, with the majority of respondents being female (95%), followed by a small percentage of respondents who preferred not to disclose their gender (4%) and male respondents (1%). The average age of respondents was found to be primarily in the range of 18-22 years old (48%), followed by 23-27 years old (40%), 28-32 years old (11%), and over 33 years old (1%).

These findings align with previous research, such as a survey by koreajoongangdaily.com (2022), which indicated that a significant majority of K-pop fans are female. This suggests that the success of K-pop artists heavily relies on the support of women. These trends indicate that AB6IX fans, ABNEW, likely consist predominantly of female supporters who place value on personal satisfaction, engage in two-way interactions, create fan-generated content, and are willing to make meaningful investments in their fandom.

### How long have you been an ABNEW

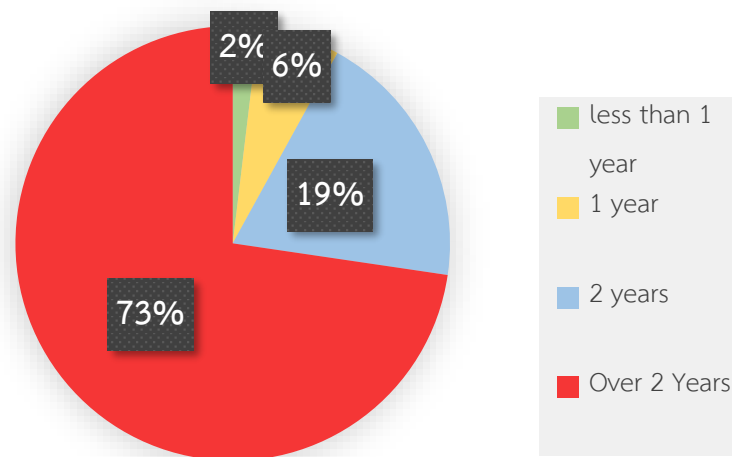


Figure 4: How long have you been an ABNEW

According to the question asked about the period of being a fan of AB6IX (ABNEW), the previous boy group of Youngmin, Figure 4 shows the result that the most respondents which is 73% (290 respondents) are being an ABNEW Over 2 years.

How long have you been an ABNEW?	18-22 years old	23-27 Years old	28-32 years old	33-37 Years old
Less than 1 year (n=8)	2.1% (n=4)	0.0%	8.7% (n=4)	0.0%
1 year (n=25)	6.8% (n=13)	7.5% (n=12)	0.0%	0.0%
2 years (n=77)	17.8% (n=34)	18.2% (n=29)	30.4% (n=14)	0.0%
Over 2 years (n=290)	73.3% (n=140)	74.2% (n=118)	60.9% (n=28)	100% (n=4)

Table 1: Outcomes of ABNEW duration segregated by age

The analysis of ABNEW's duration as per age groups revealed that the majority of respondents in all age categories had been fans for more than two years. This includes 73.3% of the 18-22 age group, 74.2% of the 23-27 age group, and 100% of the 33-37 age group. Notably, new fans who have been following for less than a year

were observed in the age groups of 28-32 and 18-22. Therefore, it can be concluded that the survey participants were fans for more than two years and predominantly belonged to the 18-22 age range.

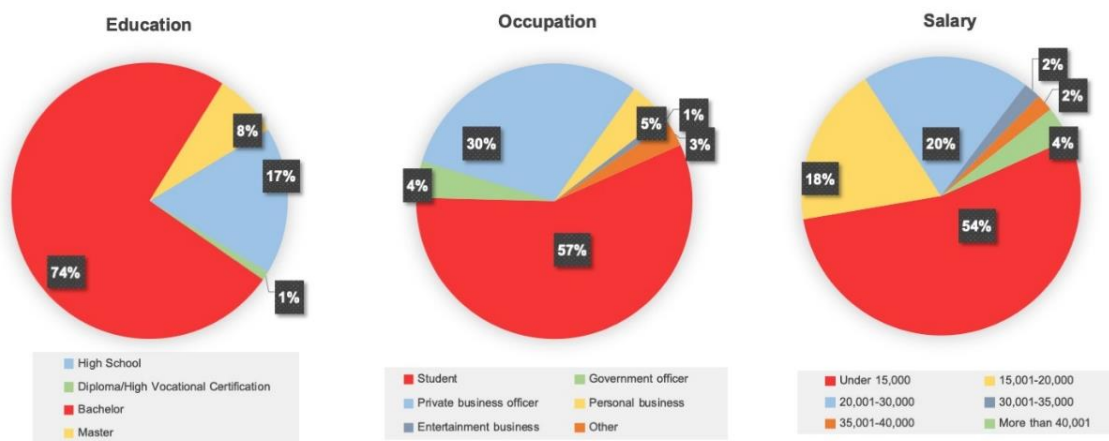


Figure 5: Personal information (Education, Occupation and Salary)

In terms of education, income, and career, the survey results revealed that the majority of surveyed ABNEW members held a bachelor's degree (74%), followed by high school (17%), master's degree (8%), and diploma certification (1%). Among the respondents, 57% were undergraduate students, while 30% were private officers. These findings align with the earlier survey results that indicated the majority of ABNEW members fell within the age range of 18-22. Furthermore, the survey results on earnings indicated that the majority of respondents had an income below 15,000 Baht, accounting for 54% of the total.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

#### 4.1 Thai Fan in term of supportive

##### 4.1.1 Free Giveaway

Giveaway or Free gifts means giving for free items, or exchanging items; whether those items are made by the person who gives them away for free or by purchasing them the purpose of the giveaway, the goals are the same: giving without spending. Giveaway is a fan culture that the majority of K-pop fans are familiar with, this activity couples with the following of the artists' work. Sabotini (1999) mentioned about fan gifts that are the “centerpiece of fandom”. General fan clubs can create the giveaway; it does not have a specific group. It is created according to the personal demand that a person wants to share or exchange those items, or it is created by Fan base (an account of more than one person that gathers together in order to form a group to promote, update information, and hold activities related to their preferred idols. A large number of people frequently follow the account).

Giveaway gifts can be many forms such as Fan Arts (drawings of artists which fan clubs painted), Fan Fictions (novels or short stories which are rewritten using the artists to be characters in those stories), Fan-Made (a recreated material which a fan club creates), and so forth. Giveaway activities always use the Twitter platform to distribute the information. It consists of important information about activities, such as items that they want to give away, the date, time, place, and hashtags related to activities or events. Sometimes people must verify that they are the actual fan clubs in order to avoid the subrogation of receiving those gifts.



Source: Twitter

Figure 6: Screenshot of Giveaway from AB6IX fans (ABNEW)

Figure 7: Screenshot of Giveaway from EXO fans (EXO-L)

To illustrate, an example of @tweet in picture 3,4 tweeted:

♥- GIVEAWAY -♥ by FONY STORE! #AB6IX1STWORLDTOURINBKK  
 mini PLASTIC CASE♥DATE: 07 MARCH 2020♥LOCATION: THUNDER DOME  
 RT + SHOW YOUR TICKET! (ไม่ถามแอดทวิตตอนต่อแถวรับนะคะ 🙄🙏 )  
 ซียูค้ำบบบ 🌹♥

[(emoji heart) Giveaway (emoji heart) by Fony Store! (Account name) #AB6IX1STWORLDTOURINBKK (hashtag for promoting an event) Mini Plastic case (emoji heart) Date: 07 March 2020 (emoji heart) Location: Thunder Dome. RT (Retweet) + Show your ticket! {Do not ask for Twitter account while in line (emoji please face) (emoji two hands) See you (emoji wilted rose) (emoji heart)}]

The Tweet in Picture 6 is attached with a picture of information and object that user wants to communicate. This tweet mentioned information important for giveaway activity, such as specifying the type of item that will be given away in the activity, date, time, and place, including further rules for all activity participants. In addition, the user used the hashtag— #AB6IX1STWORLDTOURINBKK—in order to

emphasize that the activity will be held according to the hashtag. For an example of @tweet in picture 7, it shows the details and conditions for engaging in the activity, as well as an example 1. Further conditions were added; Fan Check, which states that the announcer only wants participants who are fan clubs of Exo Chen, from FOR CHEN'S FAN ONLY; participants must display information or objects specified on Twitter such as EXO-L (Name of EXO's fan club), Ticket, Light stick, and Chen's goods (objects that refer about Exo Chen). Furthermore, the announcer used the hashtag to communicate about the giveaway and promote and disseminate information about the event

#### **4.1.2 Donation (Birthday projects, fan rice, charity)**

In Fanclub perspectives, Fans project in the name of Fandom It is another channel used to present the fan clubs' support towards artists. Fan clubs gather money received from donations which are held by Fan base for complete their projects for idols. Fan project can be many forms depending on the choosing of fanbase or discussion of fan clubs through social media channels such as Food support (sending food truck or foods to the place that idol participated or work), Fan rice (stacks of rice bags with idol's name and photo that usually send to charity), donation to several organizations or foundations on behalf of artists, Etc., Manas from MANAS SEN GUPTA (2021) mention that it shows g loyal to their idols and it has been a trend in Korea and is now common in other parts of the world. Manas also provided example of donations, BTS Jungkook Japan, a Japanese fanbase, announced that it will donate around US\$ 4,000 to a certified Japanese NGO, Kamonohashi project, to fight human trafficking in India. Also In July 2020, Chinese fans of JYJ's Kim Jaejoong donated 10,000 masks and other items during the pandemic to the singer's hometown Gongju in South Korea. The fans reportedly said that they were touched by Kim and his Korean fans' support to China with donations of masks in the early stages of COVID-19.



Source: Twitter

Figure 8: fans project (Subway Ads) #921MorningStarDay

Figure 9: Fans project (Subway Ads) #AlwaysBestofmylife

Moreover, in addition to donations to various charitable organizations, the fanbase is accepting donations for various projects aimed at publicizing artists, such as installing billboards in BTS stations, creating videos to promote on LED screens in shopping malls, and installing billboards on public transportation.

In Thailand, during the covid-19 pandemic, businesses in Thailand have been greatly affected. The format of accepting donations has also started to change, focusing on promoting or putting a label on the artist's birthday through taxicab (tuk-tuk) instead. It is also considered a political movement from the Korean fan club in Thailand, also used as an expression to campaign to support small entrepreneurs.





Source: a day magazine


Figure 10: Fans project (Tuk-Tuk Ads)

There is also a project to help small entrepreneurs that are facing problems from the Covid situation. For example, raising elephants due to the lack of tourists to watch the show, the elephant caretakers do not have enough income to feed the elephants. The caretaker is accepting donations through feeding elephants online. In October 2021, Twitter account @cms\_yx has organized a project. #Aew saves the elephant by fundraising from EXO fans to help care for the needy elephants in Surin (Province of Thailand).



Source: Twitter

Figure 11: Screenshot of Fans Project #แอ้วช่วยช้าง (#Aew Chuay Chang) helping unemployed elephants from EXO fans (Exo-l)

วันนี้เริ่มโอนเป็นวันแรกนะคะ ทั้งหมด 100 บ้าน บ้านละ 1,510 บาท  
รอดูน้องช้างกินอาหารได้เลยค่า #แอว์ช่วยช้าง @weareoneEXO 

[Today is the first day to transfer money to 100 houses 1,510 baht per house. Can wait to see elephants eat. #AewChuayChang (Exo-l help elephants) @weareoneEXO (official Twitter account of EXO) (emoji sparkling heart)]

To illustrate, figure 11 :

โปรเจ็ค #แอว์ช่วยช้าง ช่วยเหลือช้างตกงาน “เอ็กซ์แอลไทย (EXO-L)  
แฟนคลับศิลปินเกาหลีวงเอ็กซ์”  
ขอมอบเงินให้แก่พ่อควาญแม่ควาญจำนวน 100 บ้าน เป็นเงินบ้านละ 1,510 บาท เพื่อ  
เป็นค่าให้อาหารช้างที่ตกอยู่ในสภาวะขาดแคลน และช่วยเหลือควาญช้างที่กำลังลำบาก

[Project #AewChuayChang (Exo-l help elephants) helping for unemployed elephants “Thai EXO-L (EXO-L) Fanclub of artist EXO” would like to donate 100 houses to the mahouts of 1,510 baht per house to pay for feeding elephants that are in need and help the mahouts who are in trouble.]

This donation has resulted in a total donation of over 181,485 baht, making it possible to deliver food to elephant owners in the area of Kapho Subdistrict, Surin Province to distribute to 100 elephant’s caretakers. This resulted in the care of elephants in the province. Come out to thank and feed the elephants online. as well as being interested in a large number of fans.



Source: Twitter

Figure 12: Screenshot of Mahout’s reply to Fans Project

To illustrate, an example of @tweet in figure 12 tweeted:

ขอบคุณ “เอ็กซ์แอลไทย (EXO-L)” และแฟนคลับชาวไทยมากๆนะคะ ที่เมตตาต้นสับปะรดให้น้องช้างบ้านนงอินวากับพี่ช้างตกงานรวม13เชือก ให้ได้ทาน ขอบารมีคชสารคุ้มครองทุกท่านให้มีแต่ความสุขความเจริญยิ่งขึ้นไป 🙏🥰🥰🥰 #แอ้วช่วยช้าง #EXO #ช้างตกงาน #มีอบ28ตุลา64 #วิกฤติช้างไทย #รวมช้างตกงาน 🙏🥰

[Thank you to “Thai EXO-L (EXO-L)” and Thai fans so much that give us the pineapple trees for elephants in Ban Nong Thanwa and 13 elephants that lost their jobs to eat. May the monks protect everyone to be happy and prosperous #AewChuayChang #EXO #ElephantUnemployed #Mob28October64 #ThaiElephantCrisis # AmongOfUnemployedElephants (emoji folded hands) (emoji smiling face with 3 hearts)]

Pitchapa Smutradontri and Savitri Gadavanij (2020) also describe the meaning of “Fan club” that refer to a group of people devoting themselves, time, and resources to any reputed person in order to follow up their admired person or thing closely. They also pay attention on triviality such as birthday, favorite colors, etc. Participation and support of fans' artists in various forms, it is another factor that is important to the artist. As can be seen from the events organized by the fans, they

show their love and care, so it wouldn't be surprising if artists with more experience working. The relationship and bond between the fans will increase as well. The fans are bound to lose contact with or not be able to see often. When an artist has to enlist in the military for more than 2 years. This makes the fans even more worried about the artist. But fans who still support and follow continue to show their support in any way they can. Fanbase keeps updating artist news online including talking continuous exchange between fans.

#### 4.2 Perspective of fans through Idol's conscription in military

In South Korea, it faces 18-21 months of idol enlistment. It is a waiting time for fans. During that period, an enlisted idol had no news updates, no joint activity with fans, and no works can be filmed. However, fans of all nations have the same understanding of the role of military conscription.

For example: According to users from 90daykorean.com (2021) comments about military services in South Korea shows that they will support Male idols to follow the rules of enlistment.

*“My country doesn't have an army or any type of military crew, so far that i know, even though I'm a BTS fan. I consider everybody should follow the law or rule that military service is, the nations is serving everybody, ldk if equal though. Any life should be more valuable than the other, I agree people with conditions like diabetes are exempt of it.”*

username: Nubia: September 2, 2020

Another interesting comment asked in this website, about specific leave policies for soldier who on services and found some important issue.

*“Are there any specific leave policies for members of the military who are parents or become parents during their service? I imagine that people generally try to avoid it, but it occurred to me that it could*

*create a really unfortunate situation if, for example, a man found out that he was becoming a father before having enlisted”*

username: Diana: August 4, 2020

In case of Thailand, The Royal Thai Armed Forces numbers show 360,850 active duty and 200,000 reserve personnels. According to Paul Chambers, a Thai national security expert at Narueuan University says one reason for the increase in military spending, Chambers explains, has been "to expand the size of the armed forces, and that requires increasing soldiers' salaries in order to ensure a positive retention rate as a carrot to entice people to stay." And signs of an about-turn by new recruits would erode the military's rationale for a bloated defense budget (Marwaan Macan-Markar, 2020). Moreover, World Bank records show that the military expenditure (% of GDP) in Thailand has increased from 1.35 in 2019 to 1.474 in 2020 while the other counterparts are reduced such as, education expenditure was reduced from 3.057 in 2018 to 2.969 in 2019. Thailand's political and security contexts have changed from what they were in 1954 when the Military Service Act was promulgated but it has been applicable up until now with shows that it is not relevant with the present day. With the exception of the insurgency in the three southernmost provinces, which rather requires the expertise of professional soldiers, Thailand is facing no immediate or imminent security threats that would require such a high number of military draftees every year. The country is unlikely to be at war any time in the future. (Jutiporn Ounjai, 2018). Moreover, in 2019, Future Forward party submits bill to end the draft, A system is required to prevent violations of rights at barracks and soldiers may not be served for personal use, with some mechanisms in place to constantly check for violations (Bangkokpost, 2019). However, The Bill on Military Service proposed by MPs of the now-defunct Future Forward Party failed to get the necessary endorsement from Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, who is also a former Army chief in 2020 (Thaipbsworld.com, 2020)

### 4.3 A case study of Formal AB6IX's Lim Young Min

#### 4.3.1 Background, Work and Experiences of Lim Young Min

Lim Youngmin, born on December 25, 1995, is a South Korean rapper, singer-songwriter, and composer associated with Brandnew Music. He has had a notable career in the K-pop industry, primarily as a member and leader of the boy group AB6IX since 2019. Prior to his involvement with AB6IX, Youngmin participated in the project unit MXM in 2017 and was also a member of the project group YDPP in 2018.

Youngmin's early life includes a period of residence in Singapore until the age of 5, after which his family returned to Korea. He had an audition opportunity with JYP Entertainment, but did not pass the audition (kepopper.com).



Source: AB6IX's Instagram

**Figure 13: Lim Youngmin**

Young Min as member of AB6IX

After Lee Dae Hwi and Park Woo Jin, same agency as Lim Young Min in Brand New Music, contract ended on on December 31, 2018 under Swing Entertainment and CJ E&M. In April 2019, Billboard Radio China reported about newly boy group debuted, along with announcing new a talent , Jeon Woong to the group, the

complete five members revealed their group name, “AB6IX,” under Brand New Music, a South Korea-based label. In the same month, the group released an official promotional video called “HOLLYWOOD,” which featured four of the members’ self-produced audition tracks for Produce 101 back in 2017. Until 2020, AB6IX released two albums “B: COMPLETE” with title song “Breathe”, “6IXENSE” with title song “Blind For Love” and digital album “5NALLY” which consist with solo songs of the 5 members. Lim Young Min who plays a role in AB6IX as a leader with rap position, also participated in a song written in the AB6IX album.

#### **4.3.2 Scandal and consequence.**

In June 4, 2020, Korea JoongAng Daily reported Brandnew Music announcement, Lim was caught drunk driving by the police on May 31 while driving back to his team's accommodation after drinking with personal acquaintances" and had his driver's license revoked. Later in the same day, Youngmin posted his handwritten letter on AB6IX's fan café to apologize to members and fans.

In the report by Brand New Music, The agency announced that the idol will collaborate in the investigations carried out by the police, but for now, it will stop its activities along with the rest of the members of AB6IX, who will return with a new mini album on June 29 and will release the video for ‘The Answer ‘, the title track of this release (Somagnews.com, 2020)



Source: AB6IX's Instagram

Figure 14: Picture of Lim Youngmin (left side) in Concept photo for AB6IX's album VIVID

#### 4.3.3 Driving Under Influence (DUI) in South Korea

Driving under the influence (DUI) of alcohol is obviously not something to be taken lightly. This is especially true since the Korean government is now attempting to up the maximum punishments for those who cause accidents while under the influence. In cases of death caused by DUI, offenders will face a minimum of three years in jail and up to life imprisonment (Wilson Melbostad, 2019). In Korea, a drunken driving accident that results in death is punishable by at least three years in jail to a life sentence. A driver's license is suspended when blood alcohol concentration is 0.03 percent or higher, and the license is revoked when the level is 0.08 percent or higher (Hansen, 2015)



Number of Violation	Punishment Standard	
First Offence	0.2% or more	2 - 5 years of imprisonment / ₩10M - ₩20M fine (Approximately \$8,200 USD - \$16,500 USD)
	0.08%-0.2%	1 - 2 years of imprisonment / ₩5M - ₩10M fine (Approximately \$4,000 USD - \$8,200 USD)
	0.03%-0.08%	1 year or less of imprisonment / ₩5M fine or less (Approximately \$4,000 USD or less)
Refuse Testing	1 - 5 years of imprisonment / ₩5M - ₩20M fine (Approximately \$4,000 USD - \$16,500 USD)	
Second Offence or more	2 - 5 years of imprisonment / ₩10M - ₩20M fine (Approximately \$8,200 USD - \$16,500 USD)	
Injury Incident	1 - 15 years of imprisonment / ₩10M - ₩30M fine (Approximately \$8,200 USD - \$24,000 USD)	
Death	Life imprisonment or 3 years or more of imprisonment	

Source: <https://creatrip.com/en/blog/7426>

**Table 2: punishments from the DUI of alcohol in South Korea**

According to Kpophit.com (2020) posted about K-Netizen’s comment on Lim Young Min drunk driving controversy and leave AB6IX group.

*“[+84, -8] Hul daebak, crazy, I can’t believe he struggled so hard to debut and then left the*

*group like this. This is a promising group, this is actually shocking”*

*“[+47, -0] He really kicked his own luck out the door, drunk driving is a crime”*

*“[+41, -0] A leader leaving his own group... Sigh”*

After the news surpassed, K-Netizen Most expressed disappointment and was very satisfied. Due to driving violations, driving under the influence (DUI), is one of the first serious offenses for people in Korea. Under particular is the act of an artist or famous person. Angelina and Santosa (2020), reporter and editor from voi.id, wrote about DUI in South Korea. South Korea places a high priority on their public image. Criminal acts can erode a positive image and their reputation will plummet. Especially if this incident is done by a K-pop artist, they will experience bullying and find it difficult to attract the attention of fans Angelina also provided some example of DUI cases from Celebrities

- First, in 2012, Nickhun 2PM drove drunk. As a result, Nickhun's appearance on the Idol Star Championship event was completely deleted.
- Second, Comedian No Hong Chul also left Infinite Challenge after carrying out a similar case.
- Third, Kangin from Super Junior also experienced DUI events twice, in 2009 and 2016. Fans have boycotted and petitioned Kangin to leave Super Junior. Kangin was declared out of Super Junior in 2019.
- the last, June 2020, Lim Youngmin of group AB6IX drove drunk and his license was suspended. Due to this incident, the group's comeback was delayed. Youngmin also chose to leave the group and enlist in the military

#### **4.4 Results from In-dept interview and Questionnaire**

The respondents and the interviewer conducting the in-depth interviews will be presented with a consistent set of questions. In addition to the aforementioned approach, personal information will be analyzed to identify significant variables that influence the research objectives. The aim is to explore the factors that impact Lim Young Min's public perception following his conviction for drunk driving (DUI), from the perspective of AB6IX fans. The questionnaire, consisting of four questions, will gather opinions regarding fans' attitudes and opinions towards Youngmin's situation while being a K-pop artist and leader of AB6IX. The analysis will focus on five key questions, as outlined below:

No.	In-depth interview questions
Q1	Do you know any rules or regulations for military conscription in South Korea?
Q2	What is your opinion on the events that occurred before the artist's enlistment?
Q3	What do you think about an image of the artist? When an artist is enlisted in the military after the incident, which may affect the reputation of artists in their work.
Q4	What activities did you participate in or organize during the enlistment of the Idol to support idol while unable to perform other activities?

Table 3: The List of question for In-depth Interview

Q1. Do you know any rules or regulations for military conscription in South Korea?

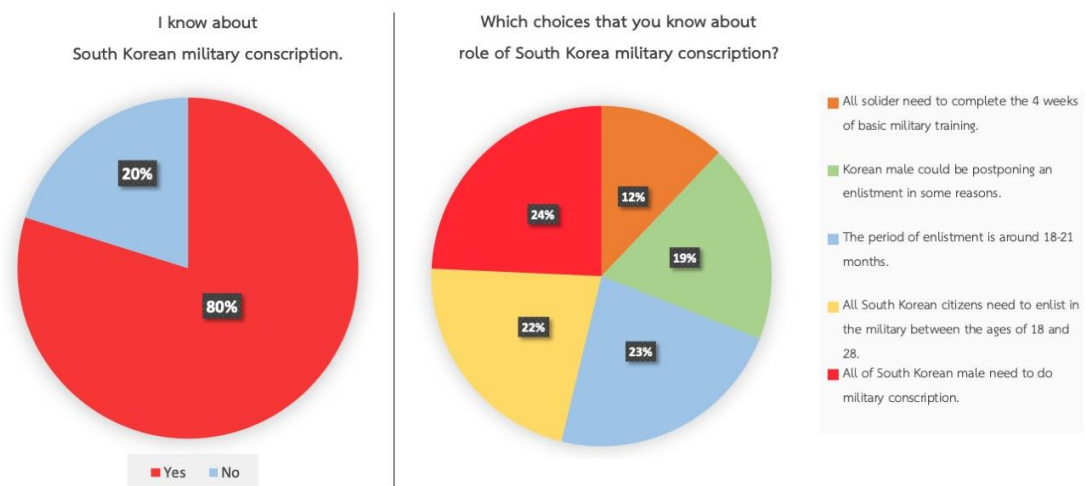


Figure 15: Which choices that you know about role of South Korea military conscription?

Based on the results of Question 1 in the questionnaire, it was found that in Figure 15, over 80% of ABNEW respondents (319 participants) were familiar with more than one enlistment requirement in South Korea. The three most widely known basic requirements received similar percentages of answers. These requirements are as follows:

- All South Korean males are obligated to undergo military conscription (24%).
- The enlistment period typically lasts around 18-21 months (23%).
- All South Korean citizens are required to enlist in the military between the ages of 18 and 28 (22%).

During the interviews, both interviewees displayed awareness of the basic conscription rule in South Korea, which mandates that South Korean men must enlist in the military when they reach the enlistment age. In addition, Interviewee A provided the following perspective on the conscription of idols:

*" In my personal opinion, the legislation in South Korea differs from that of our country. The duration of military service for South Korean men is a crucial period, particularly for celebrities or artists who are at the height of their careers. However, I understand that it can be challenging to accept."*

Interviewee A, administrators of Lim Youngmin fanbase.

Fan clubs, both domestic and international, demonstrate a strong understanding of the regulations and requirements imposed on Korean idols, particularly the mandatory military service period lasting two years. This period is recognized as a time for idols to fulfill their duties as soldiers and is viewed by fans as a source of pride and renewed confidence, especially for idols who may have faced negative news prior to their enlistment. The awareness and acceptance of these regulations indicate fans' support and recognition of the importance of military service in the Korean entertainment industry.

*" Based on my observations, when idols enter the military, they experience a different lifestyle. This change may contribute to better mental health and increased popularity among the military, thereby boosting their confidence. If idols, especially those who have faced negative publicity, enlist in the military, it can potentially improve their mental well-being."*

Interviewee B, general fan club

Based on the responses gathered in Figure 15, it is evident that South Korean men aged 18 to 28 are required to enlist in the military for a duration of approximately 18 to 21 months. This age range coincides with the period when many fans start following K-pop artists, making it a crucial stage for their careers. However, the potential growth and advancement in an artist's career are interrupted by mandatory military service obligations, which fans are aware of and understand.

Hellokpop.com (2013), mentioned that at the peak of that periods, not only affected the performance of idols, but it's also the part that worries the fans, because idols will not be able to do activities or produce media or works, or even have activities together with fans at all until being discharged. Thus, the results of all three answers.

The mandatory military service requirement is an important aspect that fans pay close attention to, as it applies to all South Korean men, including their beloved artists. This requirement prevents artists from continuing their roles as idols for a certain period of time, as they are obligated to fulfill their duties to the nation. Fans recognize and understand the significance of this requirement and the temporary absence of their favorite artists from the entertainment industry.

**Q2. What is your opinion on the events that occurred before the artist's enlistment?**

The respondents were asked to rank the consequences that most affected Youngmin after his DUI violation, choosing from five potential impacts: Popularity, Fanbase, Work, Image, and Personal life. They were instructed to assign a rating from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating the least impactful and 5 indicating the most impactful consequence.

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean of level
Popularity	1.0%	4.0%	36.0%	31.8%	27.3%	3.80
Fanbase	6.5%	16.8%	38.0%	28.5%	10.3%	3.19
Work	3.8%	4.0%	12.0%	24.0	56.3%	4.25
Image	2.0%	10.8%	22.5%	35.0%	29.8%	3.80
Personal life	4.8%	18.8%	36.8%	25.3%	14.5%	3.26

**Table 4: The result of consequences that affected to Youngmin after DUI violations by 400 ABNEW**

Based on the responses, the impact of the DUI incident on Youngmin can be summarized as follows:

- Work: The majority of fans believed that the incident would have the most significant impact on Youngmin's work. This consequence received an average rating of 4 out of 5, with 56.3% of ABNEW selecting "Work" as the highest impact level, which corresponds to level 5.

- Popularity and Image: Fans also acknowledged that the incident would significantly affect Youngmin's popularity and image. These two consequences received an average rating of 3.80, indicating a considerable impact.

- Personal life and Fanbase: The impact on Youngmin's personal life and fanbase was perceived to be relatively lower compared to work, popularity, and image. Both categories received an average rating of 3.19, suggesting a moderate impact.

These findings provide insights into how fans perceive the consequences of the DUI incident on Youngmin, with work being identified as the aspect most likely to be significantly affected.

	Year of ABNEW	Not Effective	2	3	4	The Most Effective	Mean
<b>Popularity</b>	Less Than 1 Year	0.0%	0.0%	37.7%	36.2%	26.1%	3.88
	1 Year	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.00
	2 Years	1.3%	5.4%	35.7%	29.6%	27.9%	3.77
	Over 2 Years	0.0%	0.0%	26.7%	46.7%	26.7%	4.00
<b>Fanbase</b>	Less Than 1 Year	0.0%	5.8%	47.8%	42.0%	4.3%	3.45
	1 Year	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.00
	2 Years	7.4%	18.9%	37.4%	23.6%	12.8%	3.15
	Over 2 Years	0.0%	23.3%	26.7%	50.0%	0.0%	3.27
<b>Work</b>	Less Than 1 Year	0.0%	5.8%	10.1%	52.2%	31.9%	4.10
	1 Year	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.00
	2 Years	5.1%	4.0%	11.1%	16.5%	63.3%	4.29
	Over 2 Years	0.0%	0.0%	13.3%	36.7%	50.0%	4.37
<b>Image</b>	Less Than 1 Year	5.8%	15.9%	31.9%	26.1%	20.3%	3.39
	1 Year	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	4.00
	2 Years	1.3%	9.4%	22.9%	33.3%	33.3%	3.87
	Over 2 Years	0.0%	13.3%	0.0%	63.3%	23.3%	3.97
<b>Personal life</b>	Less Than 1 Year	0.0%	11.6%	43.5%	30.4%	14.5%	3.48
	1 Year	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.00
	2 Years	6.4%	21.2%	33.3%	23.2%	16.2%	3.22
	Over 2 Years	0.0%	13.3%	50.0%	36.7%	0.0%	3.23

Table 5: The result of consequences that affected to Youngmin after DUI violations by Year of ABNEW

When the fan answers were segregated, the results indicate that the majority of ABNEW fans, regardless of their duration of fandom, agreed that the impact on Youngmin's work would be the most significant. This opinion was shared by 50% of newly ABNEW fans, 53.8% of 1st-year ABNEW fans, 65.9% of 2nd-year ABNEW fans, and 53.2% of ABNEW fans who have been supporting Youngmin for over two years. On the other hand, the impact on Youngmin's personal life was perceived to have the least effect by ABNEW fans. The aspect of personal life ranked lowest in terms of impact across all categories of fans. Regarding Youngmin's image, it was considered the second most impactful consequence by ABNEW fans. The response outcomes between 2nd-year ABNEW fans and those who have supported Youngmin for over two years showed similarity, indicating a consensus on the expected impacts. The

expected impacts, in order from most to least affected, were: work, image, popularity, fanbase, and personal life. ABNEW indicated that the impact on Youngmin's fanbase did not significantly affect him, as it ranked last with an average rating of 3 out of 5. Similarly, 1st-year ABNEW fans also ranked the impact on fans as 3 out of 5.

These findings demonstrate the perspectives of ABNEW fans on the expected consequences for Youngmin after enlisting in the military following the drunk driving conviction. Work was consistently identified as the aspect most likely to be significantly affected, while personal life and fanbase were seen as having relatively lower impacts.

During the interview, both Interviewee A, an administrator of Lim Youngmin's fanbase, and Interviewee B, a general fan club member, expressed shock and concern upon learning about Youngmin's involvement in the drunk driving incident. They shared the opinion that such events often have a significant impact on an idol's career, leading to potential suspensions from work or even departures from the band.

*“I did not know what to do because I had never experienced this type of news, so I rushed over to talk to my friend. My friend provided two opinions on whether he keeps silent and enlists in the military or leaves the band. Finally, it is true.”*

Interviewee A, administrators of Lim Youngmin fanbase.

Interviewee A mentioned seeking advice from a friend on whether Youngmin should remain silent and enlist in the military or leave the band. Ultimately, Youngmin's decision to leave the group surprised them.

*“Firstly, I did not think that it was this issue. I was very shocked. At that moment, I thought about how many months he would be suspended from the works? After that, I searched old news to see can he return to work, but I did not think he would enlist in the military right away.”*



*“I did not think he would leave the band. I thought he would be suspended from the works for 3 months. It’s far too early.”*

Interviewee B, general fan club

Interviewee B, on the other hand, initially expected Youngmin to face a temporary work suspension of three months, believing it was too early for him to leave the band. They thought Youngmin's actions were aimed at preserving the group's image and minimizing the impact on other members.

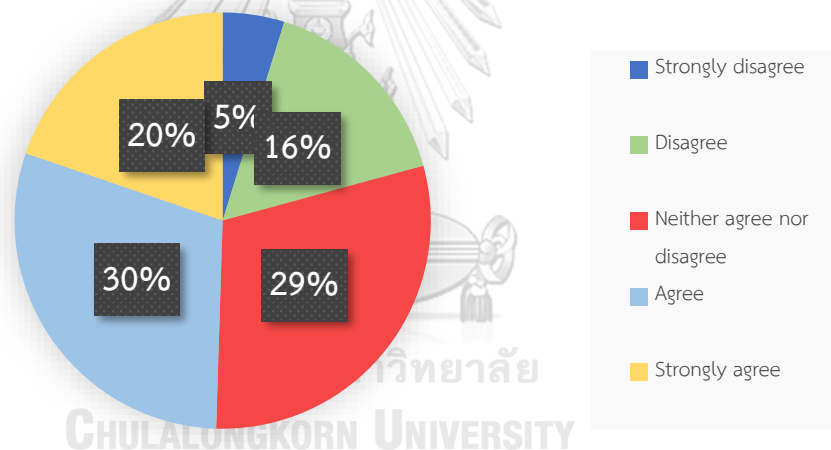
The analysis of fan opinions aligns with general observations of online comments regarding K-pop artists involved in illegal acts. Typically, penalties related to such incidents result in artists being dismissed or temporarily removed from ongoing activities. Interviewee B's expectation of a temporary suspension reflects this pattern. In the case of Youngmin, shortly after being sentenced, he uploaded a handwritten letter apologizing for his actions and expressing remorse. However, just four days later, Brand-new Music announced his departure from the group, emphasizing the impact his actions had on other members and the upcoming release of the new VIVID album.

The survey findings suggest that the image and work of Youngmin are perceived to be the areas most affected by the incident, aligning with the opinions of the majority of fans. However, it is important to note that there are still fans who choose to continue supporting Youngmin despite the incident. This response is not unique to Youngmin alone but is also observed when similar events occur to other artists. In such cases, artists often decide to leave the band or take a break from work in order to minimize the impact on other members and associated individuals. This insight highlights the complex dynamics within fan communities, where support and forgiveness can coexist alongside recognition of the impact on an artist's image and career.

**Q3. What do you think about an image of the artist? When an artist is enlisted in the military after the incident, which may affect the reputation of artists in their work.**

In the context of Korean artists as national symbols and their significant role in the country's economy, maintaining a positive image is crucial. Offenses that affect an artist's image can have far-reaching consequences. In the case of Youngmin, his decision to enlist in the military one month after the drunk driving incident had a significant impact on his idol career. To understand fan opinions, a survey can explore whether this enlistment was influenced by the incident and what fans believe will affect Youngmin during his military service.

I agree that News or events that affect to Youngmin's reputation for work. It influenced to Youngmin's decision to enlist in the army faster.



**Figure 16:** News or events that affect Youngmin's work. It influenced Youngmin's decision to enlist in the army faster.

	Less than 1 year	1 Year	2 Year	Over 2 Year	Mean
Strongly Disagree	0.0%	0.0%	5.2%	5.2%	2.6%
Disagree	0.0%	16.0%	20.8%	15.2%	13.0%
Neutral	50.0%	40.0%	32.5%	27.6%	37.5%
Agree	50.0%	16.0%	26.0%	31.4%	30.8%
Strongly Agree	0.0%	28.0%	15.6%	20.7%	16.1%

**Table 6: News or events that affect Youngmin's work. It influenced Youngmin's decision to enlist in the army faster by Year of ABNEW**

Based on the poll results in Table 6, 30% of ABNEW respondents agreed that there may be a connection between Youngmin's DUI conviction and his decision to enlist in the military. The findings from the categorized responses of fans based on their duration of fandom align with this result. Specifically, 31.4% of respondents who have been fans for over 2 years expressed agreement that the DUI incident could have expedited Youngmin's military enlistment decision. This finding is consistent with the perspectives of the interviewed fans who have been supporting Youngmin for more than 2 years.

During the interview, interviewee A mentioned that the incident was likely a factor in Youngmin's decision to enlist in the military earlier than planned. They believed that this would provide Youngmin with an opportunity to reflect on his actions, heal emotionally, and establish a fresh start. It was seen as a strategic move to allow the news to fade away and avoid any lingering negative impact on his image.

*“From my personal feeling, it may be a connected reason. Due to this issue, he should heal his mentality and discover a new environment because it is better to go for conscription.”*

Interviewee A, administrators of Lim Youngmin fanbase.

Interviewee B emphasized that when idols face negative news or reputation-damaging incidents, conscription is often considered as an alternative to deal with the situation. This perspective suggests that Youngmin's decision to enlist in the military earlier than scheduled was a strategic move to take a break from the news and minimize its impact on his career. By doing so, Youngmin could focus on personal reflection and growth while demonstrating a sense of responsibility for his actions.

*“Youngmin's arrest was a part of his decision to enlist in the military earlier than scheduled because he could not return to work immediately. He was able to take a break from the news when enlisting in the military in order to avoid stimulating the memory or bringing the news up.”*

Interviewee B, general fan club

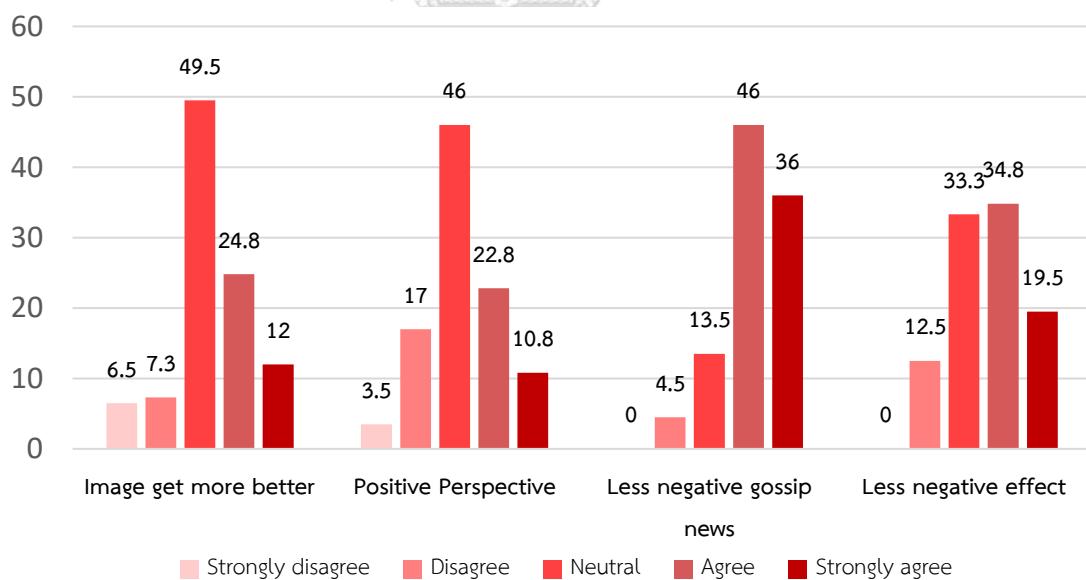


Figure 17: A good consequence of Youngmin's decision to enlist in the military?

According to Figure 17, the respondents expressed a positive view on the impact of Youngmin's enlistment in the military. The majority of fans agreed that this decision had a positive influence on Youngmin's image, particularly in reducing gossip and negative press opinions. About 36% of the respondents strongly agreed with this perspective, indicating that Youngmin's enlistment was seen as a way to alleviate negative perceptions surrounding him.

	Year of ABNEW	Not Effective	2	3	4	The Most Effective	Mean
<b>Image get more better</b>	Less Than 1 Year	10.1%	5.8%	37.7%	30.4%	15.9%	3.36
	1 Year	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	4.00
	2 Years	6.4%	8.4%	51.5%	22.6%	11.1%	3.24
	Over 2 Years	0.0%	0.0%	63.3%	23.3%	13.3%	3.50
<b>Positive perspective</b>	Less Than 1 Year	0.0%	15.9%	42.0%	27.5%	14.5%	3.41
	1 Year	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	5.00
	2 Years	4.7%	16.5%	49.8%	20.5%	8.4%	3.11
	Over 2 Years	0.0%	26.7%	23.3%	36.7%	13.3%	3.37
<b>Less negative gossip news</b>	Less Than 1 Year	0.0%	15.9%	15.9%	34.8%	33.3%	3.86
	1 Year	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	5.00
	2 Years	0.0%	2.4%	12.1%	51.2%	34.3%	4.18
	Over 2 Years	0.0%	0.0%	23.3%	26.7%	50.0%	4.27
<b>Less negative effect</b>	Less Than 1 Year	0.0%	5.8%	30.4%	46.4%	17.4%	3.75
	1 Year	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	4.00
	2 Years	0.0%	13.1%	34.0%	33.3%	19.5%	3.59
	Over 2 Years	0.0%	23.3%	36.7%	13.3%	26.7%	3.43

Table 7: A good consequence of Youngmin's decision to enlist in the military by Year of

ABNEW

When examining the impact of Youngmin's military enlistment based on the duration of fan support, it is observed that fans have varying perspectives. Fans who have been supporting Youngmin for 1st Year and 2nd Year of ABNEW believe that his enlistment positively affects his image, ranking it as the second-most important factor. However, fans who have been supporting Youngmin for over 2 years prioritize other factors, ranking the impact on image as the third-most important. This suggests that while the majority of fans acknowledge the positive impact of enlistment on Youngmin's image, long-time fans may perceive it as having a lesser influence on his decision to enlist.

Both interviewees expressed their views on Youngmin's image after his conscription, acknowledging that it had a positive impact to some extent. They emphasized that during his military service, Youngmin had the opportunity to showcase his character and dedication as a soldier, which could enhance his image beyond just the act of conscription. The interviewees believed that if Youngmin conducted himself well and fulfilled his duties responsibly, it would serve as a means for him to prove himself and improve his image further.

*“The nature of Thai people is kindness. They know that you do mistake and negligence; thus, if you feel guilty, you can start over.”*

Interviewee A, administrators of Lim Youngmin fanbase.

*“Conscription may not help in terms of image, but proving yourself in the military enhances your image by demonstrating that you are able to live a good life and fulfill your military duties well. After Youngmin's conscription, there was a chance that people might bring up the past issue; therefore, Youngmin needed to show that he could live a good life.”*

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CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

Interviewee B, general fan club

Based on the analysis of the results, it can be observed that the majority of ABNEW fans have a neutral stance regarding Youngmin's conscription earlier than scheduled. However, they do agree that this decision can help mitigate the negative news surrounding Youngmin and potentially improve public perception of him. Examining the specific results based on fan duration reveals that fans who have been with ABNEW for over 2 years believe that Youngmin's decision to enlist earlier in the military is influenced by the impact of the DUI case and his departure from AB6IX. They expect Youngmin to use this time to reflect, repent, and demonstrate personal growth to earn another opportunity to pursue his career as an artist.

Furthermore, when asked about the further impact of Youngmin's military service, most fans agree that it can help reduce negative news and potentially improve people's perception of him. However, they also believe that this decision alone does not significantly contribute to the improvement of Youngmin's image. This aligns with the opinions of the interviewed fans who suggest that Youngmin should utilize this period to prove his personal growth and demonstrate that he can become a better person.

#### Q4. What activities did you have the opportunity to participate in or organize during the enlistment of the Idol to support idol while unable to perform other activities?

The survey aimed to gather fans' opinions on Youngmin's DUI incident and assess the anticipated impact on his career. It also aimed to gauge fans' willingness to continue supporting him during his military enlistment, which typically lasts over 2 years. The research recognizes that this period significantly affects various aspects such as work, image, popularity, and fan engagement, as K-pop idols are expected to maintain their presence and relevance during their absence.

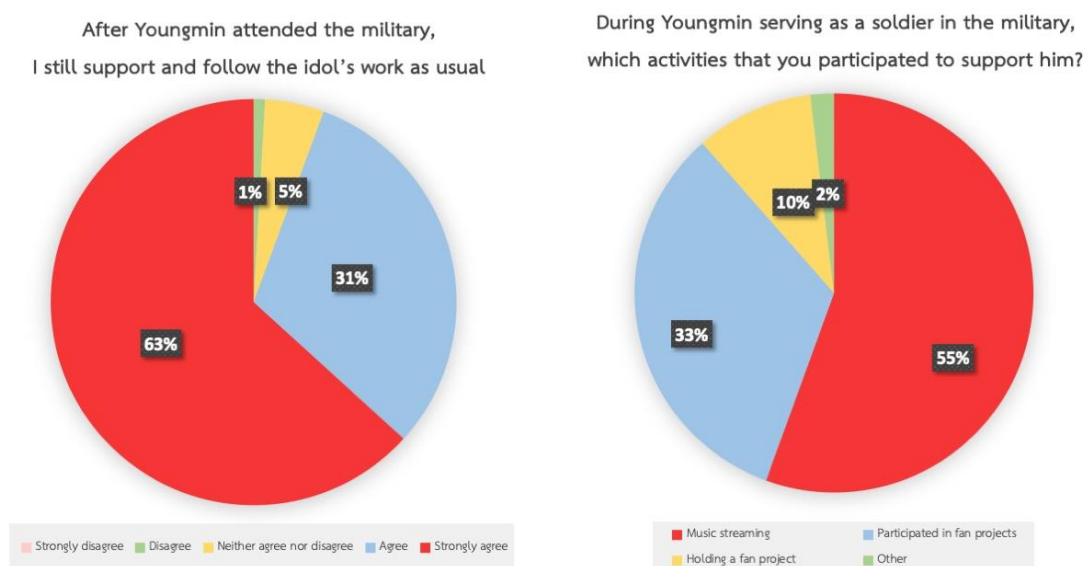


Figure 18: After Youngmin attended to military, I am still support Youngmin as usual.

According to the questionnaire results in Figure 18, a significant majority of ABNEW expressed their strong willingness to support Youngmin during his military enlistment, with 63% of respondents indicating strong agreement. None of the respondents reported no longer supporting him. Among the various ways of supporting Youngmin during his enlistment, the majority of ABNEW (55%) chose music streaming as the most favored activity. Additionally, participating in fan projects (33%) and organizing fan projects (10%) were also popular ways of showing support. A small percentage of respondents mentioned other methods such as sending letters, personal items, or gifts to Youngmin.

	Less than 1 year	1 Year	2 Year	Over 2 Year	Total (responses)
Music Streaming Platform	100%	67.6%	47.8%	55.5%	339
Participated in Fan project	0.0%	24.3%	40.9%	32.5%	203
Made a Fan project	0.0%	8.1%	11.3%	9.3%	58
Other	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%	12

**Table 8: Activity that participated during Youngmin in the military by Year of ABNEW**

When analyzing the results of the questionnaire based on the duration of being an ABNEW in Table 8, Music Streaming emerged as the preferred activity choice among fans, particularly those who have been fans for less than 1 year, with a 100% selection rate. This choice demonstrates the convenience and accessibility of supporting Youngmin through online platforms. Participating in fan projects and organizing fan projects were also popular options among fans who have supported Youngmin for 1 year or more, specifically the 2nd Year of ABNEW fans, comprising 40.9% of respondents. Conversely, options like sending letters, personal items, or gifts to Youngmin were chosen by a smaller percentage of fans, particularly those who have supported him for over 2 years. These fans may have developed a stronger connection and familiarity with Youngmin, leading them to engage in activities that go beyond conventional fandom participation.



The two interviewees shared their activities in support of Youngmin during his military service. Interviewee A, who manages the Twitter fanbase account YOUNGMIN\_TH, organized a project to donate stationery to children in Nan province under Youngmin's name on his birthday in 2019. Another Twitter account created the hashtag #everydaywithyoungmin, which serves as a channel for fans to send messages to Youngmin and express their continued support and anticipation for his return.

*“I was afraid that he would not be confident due to his personality, making him not confident before other people. He would be nervous, so I sent letters and made a photo book to let him know that fan clubs were waiting for him. Furthermore, I sent the necessary stuff to him and endeavored to let him know that people were supporting him.”*

Interviewee B, general fan club

The interviewees provided insights into the reasons why individuals continue to believe in, support, and wait for Youngmin despite some fans choosing to unfollow him. They acknowledged Youngmin's mistake but emphasized that he has faced consequences such as work suspension and leaving AB6IX as a result. The interviewees expressed the view that Youngmin deserves forgiveness for his actions.

*“He made a mistake for which he accepted responsibility, so he will restart his life by serving in the military for two years till discharge or making any other decision he chooses; we respect his decision because I believe he is mature and dependable, and we can place our trust in him.”*

Interviewee A, administrators of Lim Youngmin fanbase.

*“If you ask me if I agree with his actions, I would say no. I think that drunk driving is unforgivable and that it should be avoided. However, Yongmin received the result from his action by leaving the band and being suspended from the works and spending his life feeling guilty. His one transgression does not mean he cannot do benefit again. If he returns to work, at least he can still provide happiness for fans.”*

Interviewee B, general fan club

#### **4.5 The analysis of communication with fans through Youngmin's Twitter platform.**

Maintaining the popularity of K-pop artists is primarily driven by fan support. [www.koreatimes.co.kr](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr) (2019) reports that the Korean Foundation, affiliated with Korea's Ministry of foreign affairs, assessed the fan base. Idol artist's fans. K-pop worldwide has 89 million people (about twice the population of California) in 133 countries, showing growth and the support of the artists arising from these fans, such as Hindustan times (2018) describes fan love for an artist as a pristine bond that develops between an artist and fans as an expression of support by Its main components are love and gratitude. Participation includes organizing activities on behalf of artists.

The activities mentioned in the questionnaire are not only a means of building relationships within the fandom, but also a way for fans to express their support and love for the artists. These activities are often chosen by fans as a way to demonstrate their admiration. Similarly, artists themselves engage in various activities to interact with their fans, including creating interesting content and communicating through different platforms. This enables them to make a positive impression on their fans and foster a stronger connection.

##### **4.5.1 Using online platform to communicate with Fan club**

During important occasions or special dates such as AB6IX's debut anniversary, concerts, and fan meetings, Youngmin actively engages with fans through

platforms like Fan café and Twitter. He expresses his thoughts and emotions in detailed messages, showcasing his sincerity and creating a deep connection with fans. For example, he has shared captioned messages on Twitter, where he expresses gratitude and love towards fans, making them feel appreciated and valued. Despite language barriers, fans around the world make use of translation tools to understand and resonate with Youngmin's messages, further strengthening their bond with him.



Figure 19: Screenshot of Youngmin's on Suneung's day (CSAT in South Korea)

Figure 20: Handwritten letter from Youngmin on 1<sup>st</sup> Year debuted of ABB6IX

#### 4.5.2 Using online platform to sharing experience, good wishes to the fans and made his own activity

Youngmin utilizes platforms like Twitter and Fan café to engage with fans by sharing his experiences and stories. He regularly expresses his well wishes to fans and recommends songs with personalized messages, generating excitement and anticipation among fans. His early music broadcasting activities on @bnmboysofficial, prior to his debut as AB6IX, and his duo activities as MXM with Kim Donghyun, gained significant popularity with each song recommendation tweet receiving over 3,000 retweets. These interactions create a sense of closeness and appreciation between Youngmin and his fans.



Figure 21: Screenshot of Youngmin's Tweet on account @bnmboysofficial

Doing the same activities repeatedly until it became a daily routine or become used to is another factor that contributes to a deeper relationship. As much as reaching the relationship, the Thematter (2023) website has discussed the psychology of repeating things in humans that may arise from liking that thing. Until you do not want to change to do other things. Part of the reason for doing things that are used to, the matter makes assumptions based on the theory. Mere-Exposure Effect described as If you have used your senses to perceive something before tending to be more likely to accept, value, or even fall in love with it which we may not be aware of for this reason, the way in which K-pop idol artists regularly choose to communicate and impart their feelings to their fans. with that same activity It may be another factor that contributes to building relationships and used to. until the decision to support the artist until being able to lead to being a loyalty fan as well.

#### 4.5.3 The image and charm of the Korean artists within Lim Youngmin

Twitter account @inthemiddlex\_ have shared a tweet about Yongmin's loveliness on October 23, 2021. There were more than 73 interested people. The message tweeted by account @inthemiddlex tweet is as follows



Figure 22: Screenshot of Tweet from account @inthemiddlex\_

“มีใครอยู่มั้ยคับ โควททวิตความแสนดีความน่ารักของยองมินกันเถอะ คิดถึงอะ บางเรื่องก็ผ่านมานานมากแล้วอาจจะลืมๆไปบ้างแต่อยากลองอ่านเรื่องราวพวกนั้นอีกครั้งนะ”

[ Is anyone there? Let's quote the goodness and cuteness of Youngmin. I Miss him. Some stories have been for a very long time and may be forgotten but I want to read them again.]

The replies from fans highlight three main categories of impressions about Youngmin: leadership, warm image, and charming personality.

### 1. Leadership

As the oldest member and leader of AB6IX, Youngmin took on the responsibility of introducing the group, overseeing various activities, and providing guidance to the other members. Fans recognize Youngmin's leadership qualities and appreciate his role within the group. Which can be seen from the example of the message that has been replied to the Tweet from @inthemiddlex\_ as follows

*“During the show of the song Naek Aha Ja Youngmin hyung knows the choreography so he teaches everyone. Take a bottle of water to organize the blocking. Finally, when the score is out Youngmin hyung got very little points but he's okay. As long as the team wins, I'm satisfied.”*

*From Twitter account: @\_imafially*

*“At the end of the year (in 2019), when Woo Jin injured his foot, he couldn't walk and danced, he had to sit alone, when in the intro, Young Min came to the side of the younger brother and invited him to play and clap. Being a leader member dancing on the other side, Nong Woojin sits on the other side, afraid that she's lonely so she joins too”*

*From Twitter account: @jullyt\_*

*“The one who is everything to AB6IX and ABNEW”*

*From Twitter account: @dhwismyloves*

## 2. Heart-warming image

Fans also perceive Youngmin as someone who is caring, helpful, and shows empathy. Through shows and public activities, he has displayed a heart-warming image that resonates with fans. They view him as a lovely person who genuinely cares for others. Most fans often saw Youngmin as a lovely man, as follows

*“At the concert, if there is a free time, Youngmin likes to sit and look at the fans. Like trying to chase everyone as much as possible and will wave back every time The best one is Lim Young Min”*

*From Twitter account: @hihipearriiw*

*“Youngmin was born on December 25th, which is Christmas Day. Even though it's his birthday but one year he played Mr. Santa. Went out to buy gifts to give away fans (lucky ones) in the amount of 10 pieces. The*

*reason is 1225 = 1+2+2+5 = 10 Youngmin customized gifts, choose cards, write cards, pack, wrap, do everything himself, he pays attention on it very much”*

*From Twitter account: @imchxxxm*

*“Give me one more. This is another event that impresses Youngmin so much. In the Dingo progeam, the money is definitely not enough for Daehwi if Youngmi nbuys something else. So, he decided to buy just one candy because Daehwi wanted water. and see what he said 'Because I have to take care of little brother.'”*

*From Twitter account: @plasomworld*

### 3. Charming Personality

Youngmin's personal charm plays a significant role in maintaining his popularity. Fans find him captivating and are attracted to his warm and friendly demeanor. Many fans express a desire to participate in Hi-Touch activities, where they can have a personal interaction with Youngmin and experience his charm firsthand.

*“When I join Hi-touch in fan meeting of YDPP for the first time, when I was on stage, I was very shocked, I was shocked because he is so handsome and smiled all the time, when I looked at his eyes, it was like I touched God's hand, when I met him in AB6IX's Hi-touch, I touch him twice, he was handsome as before. The eyes are sparkling He's so nice that's my number 1 since I used to hi-touch with all artists”*

*From Twitter account: @99kiddos*

*“The picture of his smile and his face when he laughed at me during the Hi-Touch still catches my eye to this day. Seriously”*

*From Twitter account: @1995\_0519*

*“He is nice to his fans everything. Hi-touch, then gradually touch and slowly make eye contact. When going to the concert, he waved his hand and looked around attentively. He's so good”*

*From Twitter account: @alittlesunn*

#### 4.6 Responsibility and returning of Lim Youngmin

Korean idol artists often use phrases to promise improvement, express gratitude, reassure fans, and apologize when necessary. Youngmin's handwritten letter after his military discharge exemplifies this practice, showcasing his determination to show a better image, become a better artist, and work harder for the support of his fans as follows.

*“하루하루 더 나은 사람이 될 수 있도록 노력하여 꼭 좋은 모습으로 인사드릴도록 하겠습니다”*

[“I will work harder to be a better person every day and greeting you in the best version of myself]

Youngmin’s handwritten letter published after discharged in mandatory military in May 3, 2022

After Youngmin's discharge on August 12, 2023, a YouTube account uploaded a new song titled "Broken Wings" by Lim Youngmin. This song holds special significance as it is the first song composed and arranged by Youngmin himself. Despite the DUI incident, the song garnered significant attention and support, accumulating a total of 1.6 hundred thousand views (as of May 1, 2023). The comments left by fans were overwhelmingly positive and encouraging, indicating their joy and excitement for Youngmin's return. This successful release signifies the end of a long wait and showcases the fans' unwavering support for Youngmin.

An example of a comment in the Music video of Broken Wings is as follows:

*“Thank you for not giving up on music. I'm so happy that you're coming back. I've been your fans since produce 101. you are so talented and that's why I like you, despite of your mistakes in the*



*past I hope you'll learn from it and become a better person. I'm looking forward for your music in the future too. fighting!"*

*From: Fj\*\*\*\*\* Da\*\*\*\*\*j*

*"This is a nice song. Everyone deserves 2nd chances. I can't wait to see more things from him."*

*From: Fr\*\* Hu\*\*\*\*\*n*

*"It's so great that Youngmin is back~ although he made a huge mistake, I hope people can give him a chance as he is very hardworking and nice to his friends, as well as colleagues"*

*From: Me\*\*\*\*\*j*

In this case, fans continue to support and have confidence in artists like Youngmin, even after his departure from AB6IX. Fans, including ABNEW, express their support and encouragement, creating hashtags such as #다시날아올라\_BrokenWings to send messages of encouragement and show continued support for Youngmin's comeback as a confident artist.



Figure 23: Youngmin's Instagram account with more than 60,000 followers  
(data on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023)

“그리고 더 나은 사람이 되고자 이렇게 용기 내어 인사드리게 되었습니다.  
 새해에는 여러분 모두가 소망하는 모든 일들이 결실 맺기를 바라며, 저 또한 최선을  
 다하는 한 해가 될 수 있도록 노력하겠습니다. 새해 복 많이 받으세요.”

*From: @y0ung\_wiu in 23 January, 2023*

[To be a better person so gather up the courage to come and greet everyone. in this new year. May everyone succeed in everything, and I will try my best as well. Happy

New Year!]

And as mentioned earlier, Youngmin himself used the phrases commonly used by Korean idols to express confidence in his comeback. He opened an Instagram account (@y0ung\_wiu) and uploaded his first picture on January 23, 2023. The caption of the picture also reflected his determination and confidence in returning.



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## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Factors that contribute to fan loyalty on Youngmin

The results from data collection suggests that there are factors or qualities about Lim Youngmin that resonate with his fans and contribute to their ongoing support. It could be attributed to his talent, personality, previous interactions with fans, or the emotional connection they have developed with him over time. The fans may also value the notion of giving second chances and believe in his potential for personal growth and improvement. It can be clarified as follows:

1. Talent and skills: Fans may continue to support Youngmin due to his talents and skills as a performer, singer, and dancer. His abilities and performance quality can have a positive impact on his image and maintain fan loyalty.

2. Communication and accountability: Fans may appreciate Youngmin's communication with them and his ability to take responsibility for his actions. Open and transparent communication can help maintain trust and loyalty from fans, positively impacting his image.

3. Personal connection and relatability: Fans may feel a personal connection to Youngmin, relating to his experiences, personality, or background. This emotional connection can deepen their loyalty and support for him.

4. Fan-community interaction: Youngmin's engagement with his fan community, such as through fan events, fan meetings, or social media interactions, can foster a sense of belonging and loyalty among fans.

5. Perceived sincerity and growth: Fans may appreciate Youngmin's sincerity in addressing his mistakes and showing personal growth. Demonstrating a commitment to self-improvement can positively influence fan loyalty and contribute to a positive image.

6. Cultural and societal context: Cultural factors and societal norms in Thailand may influence fan loyalty. Understanding the cultural dynamics of the K-pop fandom in Thailand can provide insights into the specific factors that impact Youngmin's image and fan loyalty.

In addition, the finding that both interviewees from the Lim Youngmin fanclub believe that he deserves a second chance to prove himself after being arrested for DUI is an interesting perspective. It suggests that these fans have a forgiving and supportive attitude towards Youngmin, acknowledging the potential for personal growth and improvement. They may view the DUI incident as a mistake that can be learned from, rather than a definitive reflection of Youngmin's character. Moreover, fans often have a strong emotional connection to their idols and may be more inclined to offer forgiveness and support during difficult times. It also reflects the belief in redemption and personal growth that is prevalent in fan culture.

## **5.2 Activities that affect the support of Thai fans to Lim Youngmin**

First, can be explain by The Triangular Theory of Love, proposed by Robert J. Sternberg in 1986, is a well-known framework that explains the nature of love relationships. It suggests that love can be understood through three key components: intimacy, passion, and commitment. Intimacy refers to the emotional closeness, connection, and trust between individuals.

In the context of the influence of K-pop fan loyalty, the Triangular Theory of Love can help in exploring the emotional connection and attachment that fans develop towards K-pop idols, considering factors such as intimacy, passion, and commitment within the fan-idol relationship. Can be explain as follows:

- Intimacy between fans and artists is established through shared experiences and interactions. Fans and Youngmin develop a sense of intimacy through shared activities, including participating in discussions, posting topics, and answering questions on fan platforms. They also engage in face-to-face interactions during fan meetings and fan-sign events. Youngmin's weekly music recommendations further deepen this connection, as fans eagerly anticipate and appreciate his song choices, fostering a sense of closeness and anticipation for future recommendations.

- Passion arises from the fans' interactions with Youngmin, as they develop a liking for him and his music. Through regular communication and engagement, Youngmin's messages and music evoke a sense of passion and excitement among the fans.

- Commitment plays a significant role, particularly among long-time fans who have been following Youngmin for an extended period. The special bond that develops between these fans and Youngmin leads to a strong commitment to supporting him, even in the face of challenges and setbacks. This commitment is often described as a "pristine bond" or a pure connection between the artist and the fans.

Second, The relationship between the characteristics of Thai K-pop fans and fan loyalty. Fan characteristics relate to fan loyalty can provide valuable insights into the dynamics of the fan-idol relationship and the factors that contribute to sustained support and dedication. Some potential characteristics of Thai K-pop fans that may influence fan loyalty include:

1. Passion and Dedication: Thai K-pop fans who exhibit a high level of passion and dedication towards their favorite idols are more likely to display strong fan loyalty. Their enthusiasm and commitment drive them to actively support and engage with their idols, contributing to their overall loyalty.

2. Emotional Connection: The emotional connection that Thai K-pop fans develop with their idols plays a significant role in fan loyalty. Fans who feel a deep emotional bond, such as love, admiration, and empathy towards their idols, are more likely to remain loyal and dedicated.

3. Active Engagement: Thai K-pop fans who actively engage in various fan activities, such as attending concerts, fan meetings, and participating in fan projects, are more likely to exhibit higher levels of loyalty. Their active involvement and interaction with their idols and the fan community strengthen their loyalty.

4. Sense of Belonging: Thai K-pop fans who feel a strong sense of belonging within the K-pop fandom and fan community are more likely to display fan loyalty. They value the connections and relationships formed with fellow fans and share a collective sense of support and identity.

5. Perceived Reciprocity: Thai K-pop fans who perceive that their dedication and support are acknowledged and reciprocated by their idols or the entertainment industry may develop higher levels of loyalty. Feeling valued and appreciated by their idols can foster a sense of loyalty and deepen the fan-idol bond.

Finally, The Lim Youngmin Thai Fanclub stands out as a loyal and dedicated fanbase. They play a crucial role in supporting Lim Youngmin and have demonstrated their unwavering support throughout his career. The fanclub actively engages in activities such as organizing fan projects, participating in fan meetings, and creating a strong online presence. Their loyalty and commitment to Lim Youngmin are evident in their willingness to understand and forgive any past mistakes, as well as their continuous support for his activities as an artist. The Lim Youngmin Thai Fanclub serves as a vital support system for Youngmin and contributes significantly to his success and positive image.

### **5.3 The Significance of K-pop Thai Fan Loyalty within the K-pop Industry**

K-pop Thai fan loyalty plays a crucial role in the success and growth of the K-pop industry today. Thailand has emerged as one of the key international markets for K-pop, with a passionate and dedicated fan base. The support and enthusiasm of Thai fans contribute significantly to the popularity and global reach of K-pop artists and groups.

Firstly, Thai fans actively engage in various activities to support their favorite K-pop artists. They attend concerts, fan meetings, and events, purchase merchandise, stream music, and actively participate in online communities and fan clubs. Their dedication and active involvement contribute to the overall success of K-pop artists, both domestically and internationally.

Secondly, Thai fans help drive the global influence of K-pop through their active participation on social media platforms. They create fan content, promote artists through hashtags and trending topics, and interact with other fans around the world. This online presence and engagement help generate buzz, increase visibility, and attract new fans to the K-pop industry.

Moreover, Thai fans have a strong purchasing power and contribute significantly to the sales of albums, merchandise, and concert tickets. Their support and consumption of K-pop products contribute to the financial success of the industry, enabling artists and agencies to continue producing high-quality music and performances.

Additionally, Thai fans have played a crucial role in establishing the popularity of K-pop in Thailand and facilitating its expansion into the Southeast Asian market. Their passion and dedication have created a strong fan culture and community, leading to more opportunities for K-pop artists to perform and promote their music in Thailand. K-pop Thai fan loyalty is of great importance to the K-pop industry as it contributes to the success, sustainability, and global reach of artists. Their support, both in terms of financial contribution and active engagement, helps create a thriving ecosystem for K-pop, allowing it to continue growing and influencing the music industry worldwide.

#### **5.4 Further Research Suggestion**

1. K-pop Thai fans have emerged as a significant force, making Thailand a top destination for various K-pop activities such as concerts and fan meetings. Their enthusiasm and support play a crucial role in influencing the decisions of K-pop artists and agencies when selecting locations for their events. Thailand's strong fan base contributes to the vibrant K-pop culture in the country, establishing it as an important destination for K-pop activities.

2. In order to gain a better understanding and facilitate meaningful comparisons, future studies could consider merging data from both South Korea and Thailand. This would provide valuable insights into the attitudes and perspectives towards idols' image and military enlistment in both countries.

3. To ensure the relevance and timeliness of future research, it is recommended to select a case study that is current and up-to-date. This would enable researchers to gather the most recent opinions and insights regarding the chosen topic.



APPENDIX

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**APPENDIX: Questionnaire for a case study of Lim Youngmin****Part 1: Personal information**

## 1. Gender

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

## 2. Age

- 18-22 years old
- 23-27 years old
- 28-32 years old
- 33-37 years old
- Over 37 years old

## 3. Education

- High School
- Vocational Certification
- Diploma/High Vocational Certification
- Bachelor
- Master
- Above Master or equal

## 4. Salary

- Under 15,000
- 15,001-20,000
- 20,001-30,000
- 30,001-35,000
- 35,001-40,000
- More than 40,001

## 5. Occupation

- Student
- Government officer
- Private business officer



- Personal business
- Entertainment business
- Other

### Part 2: About ABNEW

6. I am an ABNEW

- Yes
- No

A) How long have you been an ABNEW?

- Less than 1 years
- 1 years
- 2 years
- Over 2 years

### Part 3: About South Korea military conscription

7. I know about South Korean military conscription.

- Yes (if yes, go to question 9.1)
- No (If no, go to question 10)

7.1 Which choices that you know about role of South Korean military conscription?

- All of South Korean male need to do military conscription.
- All South Korean citizens need to enlist in the military between the ages of 18 and 28.
- The period of enlistment is around 18-21 months.
- Korean male could be postponing an enlistment in some reasons.
- All soldier need to complete the 4 weeks of basic military training.

**Part 4: Consequence of an actions that affected their reputation and work as idol.**

8. Which consequences most affected to Youngmin after draft in military?

(Please evaluate on the Likert scale of 5 points from 1 to 5 ranging from the most impact to no impact)

	1	2	3	4	5
Popularity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fanbase	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Image	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. I agree that News or events affect Youngmin's reputation for work. It influenced Youngmin's decision to enlist in the army faster.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

10 What are a good consequence of Youngmin's decision to enlist in the military?

	1	2	3	4	5
Image get more better	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Positive perspective	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Less negative gossip news	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Less negative effect	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Part 5: Military conscription of Youngmin**

11. After Youngmin attended the military, I still support and follow the idol's work as usual.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

12. During Youngmin serving as a soldier in the military, which activities that you participated in support an idol?

- Music streaming (YouTube, streaming platform)
- Participated in fan projects
- Made a fan project such as giveaway, exhibition



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