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The devil's edit in Korean reality TV and audience and fan engagement

: a case study of *Street Woman Fighter* (2021)

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Abstract

This thesis explores the new and contemporary audiences and fans' studies with the genre of reality competition shows, using the Korean show *Street Woman Fighter* (2021) as a case study. A qualitative interview method was used to collect the empirical data of the study, and qualitative data analysis was employed to understand the data. The research takes the standpoint theory (Harding, 2008) to design the approach to the research, and it positions the researcher's gaze as Korean female audience of *SWF*. The thesis aims to examine a spectrum of engagement (Hill, 2019) by audiences and fans with *SWF* and attempts to investigate the power relations between audiences and fans and their criticism of producers and positive support for contestants regarding gender representation on *SWF*.

This study shows the active audience's and fan's positive engagement, with the contestants in the micro-level engagement such as tagging, watching, re-watching, commenting, and recommendation. It also reveals a high degree of negativity toward the producers because of the frequent adaptation of K-pop, celebrities, and idols to the show. This research illustrates the female contestants depicted by the devil's edit in a gender-biased way. The thesis elaborates on the power relations between the fans and audiences, contestants and producers of the show and the push-pull dynamic (Hill, 2015) is extended to the broader range, including contestants as key agencies. It focuses on how each agency shows its 'empowerment' (Andrejevic, 2004 & Napoli, 2011) in the complex power dynamic, and social media works as a platform for empowerment. In specific, the study argues that the audiences and fans perform as 'produsers' (Lind, 2020) by creating new meaning 'paratext' (Gray, 2010) surrounding the show. As a result, the intense negativity on the producers and criticism of negative gender representation combines and affects their self-identification as fans. This study contributes to media and communication studies as a new and contemporary study on audience and fans' engagement with negative gender representation in Korean reality competition shows.

Keywords: *reality show, competition show, Street Woman Fighter, SWF, gender representation, backlash, devil's edit, audience, fan, fandom, engagement, empowerment, push-pull dynamic, paratext, Korea*

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1. Introduction

1) Street Woman Fighter

SWF: Street Woman Fighter (2021) was the first female dance crew competition show in Korea, where eight female dance crews competed to be the champion. Each contestant has specialised in different street dance genres, such as hip hop, waacking, locking, krumping, and break dancing. The title originated from the video game *Street Fighter* because it has the same battle format. It was produced and broadcast by Korean broadcaster Mnet, one of the channels owned by CJ ENM. It was broadcast every Tuesday night, from 24th August 2021 to 26th October 2021, and there were nine episodes. It scored 2.887% for its highest rating (ep. 8) and lowest at 0.822% (ep. 1), and it was the best record among the TV shows with the same broadcast schedule on Korean cable and general programming channels (Song, 2021). In addition, it ranked second in the rankings with a brand reputation index by the Korean brand reputation research lab for variety shows in November 2021 (Choi, 2021). It was also awarded the best entertainment programme for Baeksang Art Awards in 2022 (Park, 2022). Following the show *SWF*, the spin-off *Street Girls Fighters* (2021) was released, and the second season of *Street Man Fighter* is planned to be broadcast in the summer of 2022 (Yim, 2022).

It was the genre of reality competition shows[1], perceived as the most popular TV genre by the Korean audience. It became a popular genre in Korea by the big hit of the series *Superstar K* broadcasted by Mnet and lasting until now. The Korean audience has always been eager to engage with this genre by watching the premieres and actively participating in the voting system to decide a final winner. The audiences of *SWF* were also passionate about their engagement with the show. However, the more they positively engaged with the show's contestants, the more they negatively engaged with the show's producers. They did not hesitate to critically reflect online. The show was criticized for the old, typical and negative representation of Korean females in the beginning. In South Korea, there has been a social stereotype of women, described as "Women's enemy is women.", which means that women tend to keep other women as enemies and compete (Kim, 2021). Similarly, the media used to

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[1] The genre of reality competition shows can also be described as survival shows and talent shows, depending on specific features of the show. This thesis only used the term 'reality competition show'.

describe women as trying to compete in most situations (Kim, 2021). This plot was easily employed in competition format to depict the female contestants representing the stereotype.

As a result, this context inspired the focus of this thesis on the reality competition show *SWF*, its genre, and the audiences' and fans' backlash against the negative stereotyping of women. It brings the question of why the show was popular, how the audiences and fans engaged with it, what kind of backlashes existed and were criticized, what kind of mechanism produced these backlashes, especially on female representation in media and what led them to become more critical. For instance, the moment the contestants shared feedback with each other was manipulated into a scene they were arguing, and the moment the contestants showed their confidence turned into the scene they looked down on others. Critics and cultural journalists raised concerns about this typical adaption of the devil's edit to the show with a creative theme and attractive female contestants (Woo, 2021).

2) Reality show challenges

It was not the first time that the genre of reality TV was criticized by audiences and fans in South Korea. The term 'devil's edit' refers to the role of deceiving the audience, following the intention of the production team. It stands for the editing style in which the producers intend to portray the specific contestants or the situations they are in, in a mostly negative light, for example, highlighting failures and portraying lousy personality traits and habits of certain contestants (Yoshimitsu, 2020, p. 85). The term was first used in a news article on the talent show *Superstar K* in 2011 (Choi, 2011). It effectively makes reality shows achieve viral social media attention by attracting the audience and fans to the rumours and issues related to shows. The Korean broadcasting centre, Mnet, is well-known for applying this style of devil's edit and still utilising it actively for reality competition shows.

According to the Korean law on the broadcasting act (2015)[2], it is clearly stated that "A broadcast shall not injure any third party's reputation or infringe on his or her rights" in the article of public responsibility of broadcasting. It also emphasizes the role of broadcasters in terms of gender equality that they shall not describe nor distort specific gender negatively, satirically, and hatefully and they shall not encourage the stereotypes of gender roles.

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[2] Korean ministry of government legislation (2020) Broadcasting act 방송법, Enforcement 13. March 2015.

However, the broadcasters, including Mnet, do not follow the law; instead, they keep pursuing the devil's edit (Choi, 2011) in reality shows.

However, Korean audiences and fans of Korean TV shows have started to care about these backlashes more than ever since the positioning of the Korean media content has rapidly changed. K-content, referring to media content produced in South Korea, has been a big success in some genres, for example, the movie *Parasite* (2019), the Netflix drama *Squid game* (2021), and the music by the boyband BTS. It brought colossal popularity and expectation to the K-content and contributed to constructing the specific genre of K-content. In 2021, the export record of K-content jumped 16.3% to $11.92 billion in a year, and it shows the increasing popularity of K-content on global platforms (Park, 2022).

At the same time, there has been an ongoing discussion on the backlash of the K-content. For example, in the Netflix dating reality show *Single's inferno* (2021), it became controversial that the male contestants repeatedly commented on skin colour as an attractive appearance. Since Korea has been a relatively homogenous society for a long time, there has not been a sensitive issue of commenting on someone's skin colour before. However, now global audiences enjoy Korean shows, and there has been a public voice that producers of Korean reality shows need to be more sensitive and care about global issues (Yoon, 2021).

Therefore, this context implies that it is the time to take the gender and fair treatment issues within the audiences and fans led backlash of reality shows seriously, especially on gender representation, since popular media culture has a significant role in negotiating the transformations of gender (Kim, 2017, p. 14). On the other hand, this study considers that engagement practices and culture by audiences and fans are closely and complexly connected with other agencies, and the degree of their connection is established differently in different geographical places (Highmore, 2016, p. 15); therefore, the research aims to put its focus on the Korean audiences and fans who understand the social and cultural context of Korean reality shows and their backlashes the most.

3) Aims, objectives and structure

First of all, the thesis aims to critically examine a spectrum of engagement (Hill, 2019) by audiences and fans with Korean show *SWF* as a case study. It also attempts to investigate the

power relations between audiences and fans and their criticism of producers and positive support for contestants regarding gender representation on *SWF*. As new media technologies keep evolving, the media audience interacting with them also evolves (Napoli, 2011, p. 4). It means the characteristics of media audiences are rapidly changing, and it is why the research needs to study the most recent and significant case in the genre of Korean reality competition shows and their audiences and fans. Therefore, this study contributes to the academic field of media and communication studies as a new and contemporary study on the audience and fans' engagement with unfair treatment of the contestants through the negative gender representation in Korean reality competition shows, focusing on the active audience and fan backlash of Korean reality TV in the Korean media industry. In order to understand the audiences and fans of *SWF*, the qualitative semi-structured interview method was employed, and the transcripts from the interview were utilized as empirical data for the qualitative data analysis. From the research backgrounds that sparked the academic interest, the following research questions have been designed to guide the thesis:

1) In what ways do the audiences and fans positively and negatively engage with the Korean reality competition show *SWF* (2021)?
2) How do the audiences and fans critically reflect on the backlash towards the devil's edit regarding the negative representation of female street dancers by *SWF* producers?
3) How can this backlash be understood in the power relations on social media between the audiences and fans, contestants, and producers of *SWF*?

The following chapter of the literature review demonstrates the key findings and arguments from previous research on relevant topics to this research. Specifically, it will start by exploring the literature on the genre of reality TV, audiences and fans, gender and media, representations, and media power. The next chapter on methodology illustrates how the research employed the interview method to collect the empirical data and adapted qualitative data analysis as an analysis method. It explains why these methods were the most suitable for this research by exploring the methodological features such as establishing a strong rapport with research participants and securing the subjectivity of the research. It also shows the research design for transparency and reflections on the research process. In addition, in the fourth chapter of the findings, the thesis demonstrates the key findings from the interviews. It explains them with the key concepts, supporting the arguments with the quotes from the empirical data. It demonstrates the positive engagement with the contestants and the negative

engagement with the producers. In addition, it illustrates the audiences' and fans' backlash to the negative gender representation of the female contestants using the devil's edit. It also explains the empowerment of three main agencies and how social media worked as a site for their power dynamic. Lastly, the thesis answers the research questions in the last chapter, the conclusion. It also reflects the limitations of the video call interview and the single methodological approach. It also suggests the potential for further studies on male audiences and fans, social media practices by audiences and fans, and production studies on Korean reality competition shows.

2. Literature Review

This chapter shows the understanding of previous research on this thesis' topic by exploring the main theories and concepts. It suggests how they can be applied and improved from this research and contribute to academic development in media and communication studies (Hart, 1998, p. 1). It tracks back the studies from the broad context of how the genre of reality TV was established and changed and which generic features it has. It narrows down the genre to reality competition shows, the specified genre of the case *SWF*. It also explores the audience and fan studies and narrows down the understanding of the audiences of the Korean reality show. Following this, it navigated the studies on the relation between gender and media, considering the gender context in Korea. Lastly, it investigates the studies on media power by primarily focusing on the concept of the push-pull dynamic (Hill, 2015) in order to help understand how it worked in this case study.

1) Reality TV

<u>Generic construction of Reality TV</u>

In order to understand the genre of reality TV, it is essential to track back the history of the establishment as a genre and early cases with generic implications. The term 'reality TV' is relatively new; therefore, the study needs to start with the history of factual and unscripted entertainment for ordinary people (Ouellette, 2014, p. 5). Here, ordinary people mean non-celebrities with high similarity with audiences.

Factual TV refers to non-fiction-based content signifying social and individual values by representations of reality (Hill, 2007, p. 3). However, it was controversial for audiences if the content represents the true reality of facts in the reception process (Hill, 2007, pp. 3-4). Factual TV includes interactive and multiplatform elements, which became part of the restyling of factuality (Hill, 2007, p. 5). In this context, factual content became classified into the genres such as news, documentary, current affairs, and reality TV, with other sub-genres (Hill, 2007, p. 5).

Reality TV has emerged as a popular and cost-effective format, covering the limitation of the scripted programming that needs to have dramatic and comedic manipulation and control (Mittell, 2015, p. 32). It covers a broad spectrum of reality entertainment and lifestyle formats (Ouellette, 2014, p. 5). The reality format highlights the promise of interactivity, followed by the spread of digital networks (Ouellette, 2014, p. 41). In this context, reality TV has diversified its programming by adapting the logic of interactive economy and thematising daily life with productive form (Ouellette, 2014, p. 41). Still, it is not easy to define the generic boundary of reality TV. This is because it has features of a broad range of generic occurrences, and the boundaries between factuality and entertainment are flexible (Hill, 2015, p. 14). The genre of reality TV has never been ordinary television, but it has functioned as where the new genre began and where potential future genres will begin (Ouellette, 2014, p. 99) because the genre keeps evolving by adding factuality into a range of different genres.

From the 1990s, Korea attempted different categories of reality TV shows, and the earliest was the one focusing on the everyday lives of celebrities with the hidden camera format (Yoon et al., 2017, p. 429). In the 2000s, Korea was strongly influenced by global reality TV show trends (Yoon et al., 2017, p. 429), and Korean broadcasters imported successful reality TV formats, such as Idol. They joined the worldwide trend in reality TV production (Hill, 2007, p. 9). In this way, the historical context in the generic establishment of reality TV affected the inception of reality TV and the Korean reality TV industry.

<u>Characteristics of Reality TV</u>

This research assumes that the characteristics of reality TV have influenced its audience engagement; therefore, this section focuses on understanding the distinctive characteristics found in reality TV. In the differentiation of reality TV as a genre, the first to focus on is that the genre of reality TV guarantees a part of authenticity. This is based on the fact that the genre of reality TV is described as one of the hybrid factual genres, which is the mix of a factual genre and another fiction or non-fiction genre, based on the development of popular factual genres (Hill, 2007, p. 4). It contains the surveillance format and offers a certain amount of authenticity (Andrejevic, 2004, p. p. 108). In addition, it provides multiple spaces between fact and fiction, and it is related to the psychosocial engagement of the audience, for example, the building of trust and distrust in shows (Hill, 2007, p. 110).

At the same time, the genre of reality TV has a high possibility of the backlash of manipulation created by producers. The homogenisation, abstraction, and manipulation in reality TV work in the context of the culture industry and audiences learn how to access the truth through surveillance (Andrejevic, 2004, p. 8). In addition, it is noticeable that it is easier to capture the truths in the digital era, but it is also easier to manipulate them (Andrejevic, 2004, p. 69); for example, the manipulation issues can be discussed in digital spaces such as social media, at the same time, the spaces can work as producing and strengthen the manipulation. In a similar context, when the genre of reality TV is combined with other popular entertainment genres, it is easy to be considered scripted and fake, and audiences tend to question the authenticity of participants (Hill, 2015, p. 153). In this case, participants in these reality television shows are perceived as wannabe celebrities, not as ordinary people (Hill, 2015, p. 154).

Another point is that reality TV contains the generic feature of interactivity. It enables the audience to experience media, and it has emotional value as an interactive and embedded experience (Hill, 2015, p. 80). Hill notes that this emotional engagement is based on passion play by the dramatic narratives and intense emotional responses (Hill, 2015, p. 88). These emotions in reality TV are constructed by the cultural practices of producers, participants, and audiences working together (2015, p. 88). Andrejevic (2004) demonstrates that this media interactivity of critical participation promotes democratisation in the media industry (p. 4). It is found that producers and fans attribute the success of reality TV to its democratic characteristic (Andrejevic, 2004, p. 112). On the contrary, the opposite perspective criticises the promise of participation in reality. It says that participation, in reality, is marketed by the media industry; therefore, it only shows a fantasy of empowerment (Hill, 2015, p. 85).

On the other hand, the genre of reality TV has substantial marketing advantages in that the genre itself generates a media hook that encourages the creation of the latest and most outrageous formats (Andrejecvic, 2004, p. 4). Reality TV contains the narrative of a mix of fact and drama, and it works under affective economics, which is the marketing trend that emotional elements become a driving force for viewing and purchasing decisions (Hill, 2015, p. 85, 102). From a negative perspective, it is seen as audiences cannot perform as free agents but are controlled by marketers, while reality TV is serving its primary task of promoting itself (Hill, 2015, p. 86).

Compared to the Western countries including the United States that Korean media culture has been highly influenced by, Korean reality TV has features closely connected to public interests and social contribution rather than focusing on economic and commercial logic (Yoon et al., 2017, p. 430). The previous research argues that this is why the broadcasters seek to reduce the exposure to sex and violence (Yoon et al., 2017, p. 430). In addition, Korean audiences of reality TV tend to find pleasure in their identification with the familiarity with the casts because they view their everyday lives (Yoon et al., 2017, p. 430).

Reality competition show

This research narrows down its focus to the distinctive features of a more specific genre of reality competition shows. It hypothesises that these characteristics have affected the engagement by audiences and fans with its genre. The case in this study is classified as the genre of reality shows based on the competition format. It can be defined as a reality talent show, reality survival show, reality competition show, or in the broad context, a reality show. According to Hill (2019), the authenticity in talent shows such as *MasterChef* is found in an entertaining narrative of crafts and professional skill (p. 141).

In Korea, popular culture, including the genre of reality TV, was considered low culture, but now, it is perceived as significant as a global force with high value (Kim, 2022, p. 3). The talent show series, *Superstar K*, broadcasted by Mnet every year from 2009 to 2016, has the reputation as the most popular and successful reality competition show. The recent cases of Korean reality competition shows are idol survival format shows such as the *Produce* series. Korean reality TV, precisely the competition-based format, has been criticised for its backlash, manipulating the voting system, called the 'authenticity scandal' (Enli, 2015). Eventually, it brought out the negative engagement with the voting system (Hill, 2019, p. 141) in the genre of Korean reality competition shows in general.

Korean reality competition shows have a distinct feature, a family-like relationship between contestants. They call each other using the same expressions for family members, for example, '형 [Hyung]', when a male calls an older brother, and '언니 [Unnie]', when a female calls an older sister. Beyond using family-like verbal expressions, people tend to expect similar roles from each other. In Korea, it is prevalent to communicate with each other

in this way in everyday lives, and it disturbs extreme competition mood in shows (Kim, 2011, p.54). However, there is a lack of academic research on this specific genre in Korea compared to the broader genre of reality TV shows; specifically, the research on recent cases is insufficient.

2) Audiences and fans studies

Audience engagement

As a performance of identity, audience engagement is fluid and keeps evolving. According to Annette Hill (2019), a spectrum of engagement can demonstrate how the cognitive and affective work is experienced in audience engagement (p. 6). It affects people to switch the modes of engagement: positive and negative engagement or disengagement, and it varies depending on the contexts surrounding the engagement (Hill, 2019, p. 7). In addition, there is an interplay between different media industry stakeholders, and their spectrum of engagement has connection points (Hill, 2019, p. 16).

In focusing on negative engagement, several scholars and perspectives approached its understanding. Jonathan Gray (2021) demonstrates that engaged dislikes by audiences seem to be destructive; however, they are potentially positive (p. 14). In his book, he argues that the critiques started from dislike of the media showing the audiences' hope and expectations (p. 143). Likewise, audiences need to be studied in the context behind negative engagement and understood by what it represents, not as a text itself. It should not be understood as a negative reaction itself. In this sense, Gray (2021) put his focus on the process of how identities are spoken, articulated, enunciated, and performed as the expressions of dislike (p. 211)

According to Bourdieu's theory of distinction, negative engagement can be understood as a classed performance showing superiority (Gray, 2021, p. 183). It is based on the distinction of gender, race, nationality, and other types of identities (Gray, 2021, p. 183). In this sense, negative engagement with the genre of reality TV, in the broader concept, popular culture can be understood as a performative superiority based on the inception of the genre, which perceives it as a low-quality culture. In addition, negative engagement with the backlash of reality TV can be interpreted as audiences' superiority against producers.

On the other hand, Gray (2021) also notes that this negative reaction by audiences turns into principled and engaged dislike when they are surrounded by social interaction and communities (p. 267). He also adds that an individual's reasons for dislike interact with others (Gray, 2021, p. 267). This is the point that shared audience engagement in specific communities such as fandom, or online platforms has sociality, amplifying and changing a range of engagement practices.

Popular culture fandom

The term 'fan' and 'fandom' have been used to portray people entertained by their preferred media genres, and television fandom tends to be more passionate about devoting themselves to fan activities (Ju, 2019, p. 75). In this context, the features of popular culture fandom have a close relation to the engagement with the cultural objects. According to Lewis (1992), the audiences and fans of popular culture cannot be explained as a singular group with identical features (p. 53). She suggests that the relationship between popular culture and its fandom is highly influenced by the cultural production of pleasures, such as meanings and ideological representation (Lewis, 1992, p. 55). She also argues that audiences are aware of their own implication in the media structure of power, and they are enabled to figure out which cultural segments manipulate them (Lewis, 1992, p. 53).

Hill (2019) notes that popular culture fans have a sense of ownership, leading them to play a role similar to co-creators and supporters (p. 110). She proves this with the case of *Utopia* by arguing that they are not consumers who only consume the culture, but they embrace it and discuss it in their best way (Hill, 2019, p. 104). She demonstrates that fans also show their intense commitment to culture, for example, by watching and re-watching it and embracing it into their everyday lives (Hill, 2019, p. 86).

Television shows contributed to establishing widespread international fandoms across national borders, and transnational fans show their smart use of digital technology to create, change, and experience together with each other in a community (Ju, 2019, p. 75). In addition, online fandom for TV shows offers a comfort zone for fans to have interactive fan practices with others by sharing interests (Ju, 2019, p. 75). It also functions as a creative textual space for fans to play by imagining new text and graphics, and TV show fans engage with the narratives of the show in online fan communities (Ju, 2019, pp. 75-76).

On the other hand, there is a discussion on the stigmatisation of being involved in fandom and being a fan. Fandom has been stigmatised by the press and described as dangerous, abnormal, and silly, and it has resulted in the public denying the fandom and carrying it secret to be a fan (Lewis, 1992, p. 1). People tend to do 'othering' fandom and fans as deviant, illustrating the fans as desperate and dysfunctional (Lewis, 1992, p. 26). This stigmatisation of fandom and fans is why some people are afraid of showing off their affection for the specific genre or content in public and revealing themselves as fans. The scholars, including Tague (2020), explain it with social identity theory as the conflicting relationship between fan stigmatisation and fan identification (p. 324). They researched dentity motivations that can mediate this relationship and argue that the sense of belonging has direct and indirect effects (Tague et al., 2020, pp. 328-329).

<u>Korean reality show audience</u>

Korean reality show audiences have distinctive features compared to other audience groups of different genres and those in different geographical contexts, such as Western audiences. Even though the genre of reality shows was imported from Japan and some western media industries to Korea, Korean reality shows were highly influenced by the cultural context.

According to Yoon (2011), Korean audiences of reality TV tend to care about the authentic process of presenting reality; therefore, producers care about creating authentic storytelling (p. 19). In addition, he argues that Korean audiences tend to have a strong emotional engagement with shows; in this sense, the producers put attention on immersing the audiences emotionally in the show, for example, by showing them the producer-entertainer friendship (Yoon, 2011, pp. 25-26). In a similar context, Jin (2020) also mentioned the intimate relationship between celebrity casts and audiences is the key to successful reality shows (p. 48). In this process, the producers have used their social credibility to construct audiences' fondness for celebrities (Jin, 2020, p. 48). In addition, the younger Korean audiences have preferred to watch short clips of TV shows on digital media platforms such as YouTube rather than watch the full content on TV (Jin, 2020, p. 45). Considering this characteristic, Korean reality show producers started to take the alternative format and channel for production and distribution in experimental ways (Jin, 2020, p. 45).

On the other hand, Kim (2011) argues that Korean audiences tend not to believe that they have objective and rational criteria for judgement since they consider that audience can have various reasons to decide their vote, which can be irrelevant to performances or professional skills of contestants (p. 58). The study claims that Korean audiences of reality competition shows tend to hand over a part of their authority as judging agents to professional experts and show strong trust in them (Kim, 2011, p. 58). It is based on the establishment of the state-led collective mentality in modern Korea, where transparency can explain fairness, and it should always be stated as numbers of quantitative data (Kim, 2011, p. 59). In other words, it shows the typical communication strategies in Korea, focusing on numberism and hierarchy (Kim, 2011, p. 59). However, there is a lack of research to understand the recent features of Korean audiences; therefore, here, this study finds the academic implication that it can update the research following the current characteristics of the audiences.

3) Gender and Media

<u>**Gender context in Korea**</u>

In order to investigate how gender representation is described in Korean media, there is a need to understand the gender context in Korea, which stands for gender inequality in the labour market, family, and so on. This is because audiences, which the study would like to focus on, cannot be explained with a single context and media because the texts, the cultural artefacts, have different meanings in different contexts. It is called a 'sensibility', which stands for "a particular form of engagement or mode of operation", and it measures the effects that the elements within a specific context can perform (Lewis, 1992, p. 54).

The social system in Korea is rooted in Confucianism, which has strictly conservative gender roles and norms; however, it is not the only factor which constructed the gender context in Korea. According to Kim (2017), the construction of the modern gender hierarchy in Korea is based on militarised modernity and gendered mobilisation (p. 58). After the Korean War, which occurred from 1950 to 1953, males were required to conduct the national duty of military service and be primary workers. It affected the division of labour between men as providers and women as housewives (Kim, 2017, p. 6). The modernity in Korea was influenced by men's military mobilisation, mainly by the authoritarian military government from the 1960s to the 1980s. The labour by females was recognised as the one for their

families and society, not the one with individual scale, such as for self-actualisation (Kim, 2017, pp.11-12).

When it comes to education, as a significant indicator and agent of female empowerment, there was greater gender equality and the expansion of educational opportunities for females in contemporary Korea (Kim, 2012, pp. 2-3). The females in Korea began to gain higher education levels, and it started to be more open for females to have aspirations for a career, economic power, and values such as independence, freedom and self-fulfilment from the 1980s (Kim, 2017, p. 11). However, it was still common for them to experience the failure to actualise their desires (Kim, 2017, pp. 11-12). Since the gender role for females within families was still emphasised, the females were often expected to discontinue their careers after childbirth (Kim, 2017, p. 12).

In contemporary Korean society, females show more liberated participation in educational attainment and the labour market (Kim, 2017, p. 13). The social role of females has rapidly transformed from the old-fashioned image of the 'good wife and wise mother' to the career woman who finds pleasure in working and playing (Kim, 2017, p. 18). However, they are still constrained by the national bio-political control of their bodies and reproductive choices (Kim 2017, p. 13). Gender issues which were hardly discussed in the past, are still perceived as controversial topics. However, Korean society still has its deep-rooted gender inequality in society, and in the end, this gendered socioeconomic and cultural status has influenced the structuring of the lifestyles in Korea as well (Kim, 2017, p. 11).

Gender representation in media

Media has played different roles in dealing with gender issues; however, it is apparent that it has maintained the conservative gender representation in media, especially among females. In order to understand gender representation, the study explores the concept of representation. Stuart Hall (2016) demonstrates that representations tend to be converted into the facts themselves, and they function by regulating behaviour toward others and forming a relationship (p. 57). He focuses on how the interplay of meaning and representation formulates the social practices; therefore, they are intertwined with ideology in a social context (Hall, 2016, p. 136). In specific, gender representation of females has been frequently used as a metaphor for political ideology rather than demonstrating a representation of

individual females (Carter et al., 2014, p. 24). Still, feminist discourse in the media is perceived as conservative, and the gap between the real experience of gender inequality and representation in the media is distinct (Carter et al., 2014, p. 27).

The popular media cannot avoid the criticism of its negative aspects in constructing negative gender representation, and the way of producing gender representation is more complex than in the past. According to Lindemann (2021), gender expectation found in reality TV is a social construction of gender behaviours and roles people perform every day (pp. 175-176). The popular media tend to take these gendered notions to represent specific characters, such as heroic figures (Lupton, 2013, p. 223). Lupton (2013) argues in her book that risk-taking roles represent masculinity and risk-avoiding roles represent femininity in media (p. 228).

However, the genre of reality TV also leads people to question the old gender norms taken for granted. (Lindemann, 2021, p. 8) Popular media culture has played a critical role in changing females' gender issues and everyday lives because media globalisation led to female individualisation, the change in their identity formation in socio-cultural consequences (Kim, 2017, p. 14). According to Kim, media grows transnational engagement and emphasises individualisation and lifestyle choices, deconstructing representation and comparing experiences from fixed gender identities and inequality (Kim, 2012, p. 18). Likewise, modern media is also evaluated as it has less stereotyped gender representation (Gauntlett, 2008, p. 98).

There is research conducted on gender representation in Korean media. Garza (2021) examined how the genre of K-pop portrayed the image of cosmopolitan females combined with the racial representation, focusing on the K-pop artist CL's song and music video as its case study. The study argues that the artist disembodied and decontextualised the capitalised image of women (Garza, 2021, p. 34). On the other hand, there is another research on gender representation and aspirational paternity found in the reality shows on celebrity dads looking after their children (Jung, 2020, p. 191). The study claims that the shows constructed new male representation in media, specifically, the positive image of fathers with strong fatherhood, by female spectatorship from the physical absence of females in the shows. (Jung, 2020, p. 202). However, it was also found that there is a lack of studies on female representation in reality competition shows in Korea.

4) Power and Media

<u>Media power</u>

According to John Corner (2011), there are different themes in understanding media power. The first is that media is seen to be bad because it does not have responsibility (p. 14). In contrast, the second theme is based on the idea of good power (Corner, 2011, p. 14). Another theme is that media power is perceived differently depending on the power relations with other agencies and institutions (Corner, 2011, p. 14).

As one of the distinctive features of media power, it has the form of soft power, not the physical power, which is visible; therefore, it carries challenging to measure the degree of power (Corner, 2011, p. 14). Another focus is that media power transfers or generates meanings and value (Corner, 2011, p. 15). In addition, one of the reasons why media and communications studies have significance in power is that it plays a role in reproducing and growing elite power (Freedman, 2014, p. 35). In specific, it enables the interpretation of the elites as market actors and plays a crucial role in cementing power relations as the means of centralising and enlarging elite power (Freedman, 2014, p. 35).

Freedman (2014) identifies four media power paradigms that theorise the media power play from different perspectives in his book. The first is the consensus paradigm that highly influential media power is widely spread to society, and it contributes to constructing a stable social arrangement by assisting the collective self-realisation, coordination, democracy, and social interaction and adaptation (Freedman, 2014, pp. 16-19). The second is the chaos paradigm, and media is not free from the power of the gatekeepers, the key actors with authority in the digital media (Freedman, 2014, pp. 19-22). Next, the third is the control paradigm, demonstrating that dominant media takes control in establishing social narratives by using symbolic resources (Freedman, 2014, pp. 22-25). The last is the contradiction paradigm, which recognises the unequal power frameworks surrounding media and perceives media power as always unstable and contestable (Freedman, 2014, pp. 25-29).

These four paradigms help understand the power in the economic, political, technological and cultural contexts and how to construct the power dynamics in different genres and platforms (Freedman, 2014, p. 16). In this sense, research also investigated the media power combined

with other spheres. In specific, most public and commercial organisations bring media into their work since they understand its high degree of power (Corner, 2011, p. 15). However, media power has both aspects that can drive benefit and bring a contribution; at the same time, it has the potential risk of getting caught up in media power flows and getting harm (Corner, 2011, p. 15).

The contradiction in the power dynamics is clearly found in the media policy process (Freedman, 2014, p. 64). It is based on decision-making dynamics by the gap of the allocated power in the scope of the political process, and the media performs as a crucial vehicle to mobilise interests and agenda formation (Freedman, 2014, p. 66, 68). In this context, media policy is perceived as a conflict-ridden process of constructing the dynamics of the media environment for the production, distribution and consumption (Freedman, 2014, p. 69).

On the other hand, various research was conducted on the factors that influence the construction and transformation of media power. For example, Jin (2020) focuses on the characteristic of storytelling in media and emphasises that it has the power to produce, narrate, and share the knowledge with communities and make it last and be remembered (p. 195). In addition, celebrity culture constructs media meta-capital, which captures market power in media by using reputation (Elliott, 2018, p. 12). Furthermore, the technology evolution also has influenced its output and relationship with sites of power, and in this sense, it has a high possibility that the power will be transferred from the content distributors to technology enterprises (Moran, 2009, p. 14, 48).

Push-pull dynamic

The idea of the push-pull dynamic has been contextualised differently by various media scholars. For example, Moran (2009) describes the push-pull as the tendency in global television program distribution (p. 88). He demonstrates the push as the direction of cultural specificity and identification and the pull towards homogeneity and cultural convergence (Moran, 2009, p. 88). His study claims that these two dimensions work together by complementing, contradicting, meshing, grating, and buffeting each other (Moran, 2009, p. 88).

However, this study focuses on the concept of push-pull dynamics by Anette Hill (2019), which means complicated power relations between producers and audiences (p. 4). The flow of power performance appears to follow a top-down direction from producers to audiences; however, the research on the push-pull dynamics by Hill (2016) emphasises that power is multidirectional, based on the case study of the drama *Bron* (p. 765).

The study watches audiences trusting producers to provide richly rewarding content but pulling away from the heavy flow of commercial television (Hill, 2016, p. 766). It shows that 'television itself' (Hill, 2016) disconnects television content from the audience, and it moves the audience to create their own practices against the television industry measures (p. 766). In this sense, the concept of the push-pull dynamic is an integrated approach to understanding the transaction as connection, disconnection and contradiction between production practices and audience engagement. (Hill, 2019, p. 5). Hill (2015) mentions in her book that the boundaries between television producers and audiences become unclear (p. 86).

As such, the idea of the push-pull dynamic is often described as producer-audience relations; however, this thesis extends its range to other agencies. The power dynamic surrounding key agencies plays a crucial role in defining audiences and understanding their position and role in relation to other stakeholders (Napoli, 2011, p. 17). In this sense, it leads to the understanding of media power relation between producers and audience, but it can be extended to other agents in media, such as contestants.

The contestants in reality competition shows can be passive when it comes to having their narratives edited by the producers; at the same time, they can play a role of a part of co-creators of shows. This is because they have a high potential to transform into celebrities, influenced by the power of media networks (Hill, 2019, p. 213), leading them to have a powerful position in the production.

3. Methodology

1) Methodological approach

The research started from the question from the perspective of Flyvbjerg (2001) on how social science can matter again. Social science has significance because it aims to define the social issues, risks, and possibilities in the future we can face and contribute to societies (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 4). This is why media and communication studies matter. In order to understand it more, the research adapted qualitative research methods, which enable an interpretation of the object of analysis and helps understand the meaning that individual and groups have in their communication (Bruhn, 2012, p. 266).

In specific, semi-structured interviews were conducted for the research in order to follow the quote "Assume less and Investigate more" by John Corner (2011, p. 87). Subjectivity is crucial in media and cultural studies since it enables intellectual dynamics and knowledge production and circulation. In this sense, a semi-structured interview, which offers rich and sensitive data to understand audiences and media (Hansen & Machin, 2018, p. 301), was the best approach to conduct audience research.

In addition, this research is based on a case study, which offers hypotheses that can be examined in the initial stages of an investigation (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 66). Since only a few previous studies were conducted on the audiences, backlash, and gender representation in reality competition shows, it was significant to have a case study on this research topic and aims. The research selected the most recent and popular case, which the researcher values the highest among case candidates.

Lastly, this research takes the standpoint theory by Sandra Harding (2008), which studies sciences 'from below' by stressing the significance of contextualization through 'Within' research (p. 61). It focuses on the groups in the shadows behind the dominant groups that benefited from social progress (Harding, 2008, pp. 5, 225). In this sense, this research takes the Korean female audience and fan's perspective as the researcher's gaze.

2) Interview method

The research took the interview as the main method to collect the data, and qualitative data analysis was performed in order to draw out the findings from it. The research narrowed down the sample to the Korean female audiences and fans living in the Seoul metropolitan area, aged 20s to 30s, and who have watched all the episodes of the show *SWF*. This sampling is based on the fact that the show had the 20s and 30s as the biggest age group audience, 69.0% and 13.6% each, and the highest rating in the group of females 30s, 6.7% (Lee, 2021 & Park, 2021). Furthermore, the Seoul metropolitan area has the highest internet and television access in Korea (Han, 2021). The samples were both audiences and fans because the research intended to see how the participants identified themselves regarding their engagement level with the show. As a result of the interviews, the identification of the participants was different as fans, followers, and audiences. The identity of a follower was perceived as the one between the level of audience and fan; however, this research did not specify the difference of each level because it was not the main research topic. In addition, the division was vague because it found the difference in how people define each level.

In order to verify the validity of the sample, two causal chat interviews were carried out. The casual chats were not voice recorded; however, the researcher recorded some key points by writing down memos during the chats. The first chat was conducted to design the themes of the interview guide, and it offered the structure of four categories: producers, contestants, audiences, and social media, as the key factors consisting of the audience engagement with the show *SWF*. The second chat was on male audiences to see the gender difference as audience engagement and decide to limit the samples to females or include all genders as samples. The distinctive features of the engagement by male audiences were not found in this chat; therefore, it was decided for the research to focus on the engagement by female audiences with the show.

The interview guide was modified through several processes. The first draft of the guide was revised based on the feedback of the supervisor, and it was utilized for the pilot interview. It was revised again after the pilot by changing the orders of some questions and adding sub-questions. After completing the interview guide, the questions were translated into Korean. The detailed interview guide was added in the appendices (Appendix 4). The research adopted snowball sampling to recruit 10 participants (Appendix 3) based on social media and

networking through friends of friends. For the recruitment, the poster for the interview invitation was designed with brief information about the research, and it was distributed by friends of the researcher on social media platforms (Appendix 1). People who wanted to participate in the interviews first contacted with their friends who shared the post of invitation, and their friends offered the researcher their personal contact. The recruitment process lasted for three weeks, and 11 people showed interest. One of them joined the pilot interview, and the rest joined the official interviews used as the data source of the analysis. The interview guide was designed to last the interviews approximately an hour. The early questions in the guide were designed not only to create rapport between the researcher and the participants but also to get background information on the daily media practices of the interviewees. Due to geographical and travel restrictions against the COVID-19 circumstances, all the interviews were conducted via video meeting software. Most interviews were conducted on Zoom, by sharing the invitation link with the participants in advance. However, one participant had technical issues, so it was conducted on Facetime.

In order to keep the concentration of the researcher during interviews, not more than two interviews can be conducted a day. Interviews ranged between 40 to 56 minutes in length and 48 minutes on average. During and after each interview, reflexive notes, including the moments that the participants emphasized by accent and facial expressions that the voice recording cannot contain, were made and reflected in the transcribing process (Appendix 6). The transcripts were recorded on Google Docs based on the voice records. All the interviews were conducted in Korean since it is the most comfortable language to understand for both researcher and the participants. Each participant chose the place for video-call interviews by themselves, where they felt comfortable the most. The only thing required for the participants was to choose a quiet place so that the interviews would not be disturbed by noise. The researcher conducted transcribing when each interview was finished. One of the full transcripts was put in appendices as a sample to prove the transparency of the research (Appendix 5). In order to prove the transparency of the research, one of the original transcripts in Korean and its translated version in English was shared with the supervisor, and the original codebook and translated version were also shared. In order to minimize the risk of losing the meaning of the original data in the translation process, the translation from Korean to English was conducted after completing the descriptive codebook (Appendix 8), and the analysis process was conducted in English only.

3) Analyzing the data

Data analysis

The coding process followed the strategy by Pat Bazeley (2013), with two major stages of initial coding and focused coding (p. 126). As the initial step, the descriptive codes, sometimes referred to as open codes, were extracted from the transcripts, identifying the descriptive statements. These codes were developed into focused coding under the analytical categories. In order to improve validity and reliability in the coding process, the research followed the guide by Pat Bazeley (2013).

The descriptive codes were made using the comment function on the Google Doc document of the original transcripts, and they were reorganized in the codebook of the Google Spreadsheet document (Appendix 7). The research collected 528 descriptive codes and categorized them with colours under the three different labels: the spectrum of engagement, gender and power, and context. Following this, the codes were integrated into the mind-mapping with key themes and keywords (Appendix 9). From this process, the thematic statements describing the key findings were created.

4) Ethics

In order to prevent ethical issues, the research paid much attention to securing the privacy of the interview participants. According to Pat Bazeley (2013), the process improving the transparency of qualitative research has a risk of intruding on the privacy and confidentiality of the interview participants (p. 408). Therefore, it was significant to design the strict rules of ethical consideration. The personal information of the participants, such as their names and specific address was managed as confidential. The information on their age and address, was only utilized to identify whether they could belong to the sample group, and their names were anonymized by allocating them random names. The recorded voice files of interviews were managed confidential, not being shared with anyone.

In addition, at the beginning of each interview, the researcher briefly explained the interview topic, purpose, and expected length to the participants, even though it was shared with them already in the recruitment. After that, the participants agreed to join the interviews, and it was

proved by their written consent that they filled up their names and the date by themselves (Appendix 2). Since the files contain their names, they were also managed confidentially. They were also informed that the interviews would be conducted in a video-call format in the recruitment process, and all of them agreed with it.

5) Critical reflection

The research faced some challenges in its methodological approach. First of all, it was challenging to balance the position of a researcher because the participants were aware that the researcher also followed the show *SWF*. Since the research is based on standpoint theory by Sandra Harding (2008) in terms of the positioning of a researcher, it was helpful to understand the audience and fans' engagement at a closer distance. However, it brought some challenges with disturbing the flow of the interviews. For example, the participants answered something irrelevant to the question because they had something else or answered too long, or even wanted to listen to the researchers' reflection. They wanted to share too much with other audiences and fans. In addition, they sometimes assumed that the researcher already knew what they were going to talk about and skipped some answers, so the researcher had to ask them again. There was another limitation from the standpoint theory, the researcher's gaze. Since the researcher has a similar background to the participants in the study and takes the same standpoint, there was a risk that the researcher might have missed significant points from the empirical data. Taking the same standpoint with the participants can bring out the difficulty of figuring out new and different things taken for granted since the standpoint understands how things work (Hansen & Machin, 2013, p. 232). Therefore, the research balanced the perspective from the standpoint and subjective view, taking the standpoint in the interview process and focusing on research neutrality by keeping a proper distance from the empirical data in the coding process.

4. Analysis

This analysis chapter will explore the findings of interview methods. First, it will demonstrate the spectrum of engagement (Hill, 2019) by the audiences and fans with the show *SWF*. Next, it will explain how the producers created gender representation on the show and how the audiences and fans reacted. Lastly, it will show the power relation between three agencies consisting of the show: producers, contestants, and audiences and fans, and how they used social media as a platform to empower themselves. In order to prove the transparency of the empirical data supporting the analysis, direct quotes from the interview transcripts will be used.

1) Spectrum of engagement

This section explores the spectrum of engagement (Hill, 2019) from the interviews with the audiences and fans of *SWF* by illustrating different types of engagement: positive and negative engagement. Positive engagement includes emotional identification with sympathy and empathy, voting participation, and encouragement for contestants (Hill, 2019, pp. 11-12). The study investigates how the audiences and fans showed their positive emotions, especially with the contestants, and it explains the backgrounds that affected their positivity. On the other hand, negative engagement draws emotional dis-identification (Hill, 2019, p. 12). The study illustrates the criticism of the producers on several points, such as their lack of understanding in terms of the dance genres, contestants, and social atmosphere. In addition, this section also demonstrates the self-identification as fans by the participant in the study.

<u>**Positive engagement**</u>

The participants supported the contestants in various ways, such as participating in voting, leaving supportive comments, and watching their live broadcasts on Instagram:

> I didn't watch it because it was an idol competition show. I watch the shows that the dancers on *SWF* are in. (…) When I see comments like 'that was a really bad performance' then, I wrote back like 'How dare you say that' (…) I was like 'this is art!' and sometimes others

joined. (…) It's really fun to know about the dancers, one by one. (…) It's so cool that I can know about these awesome people that I didn't know before.

(Jennie, 26 years old female freelance producer, a fan)

Jennie fought against internet trolls on social media who made negative comments on the contestants, regardless of their favourite dance crews. It can be understood as they had a sense of belonging as fans of the contestants, which created a bonding between them. This is because they shared same emotions and experience while fighting against negative comments on the standpoint of fans. It also proves that fans have a feature that they are likely to engage in diverse communal activities in that they can share their desire as fans and construct social relationships with other fans (Abercrombie & Longhurst, 1998, p. 130).

In addition, they show their continuous engagement with the contestants by watching the extra content, other shows, and previous content that the contestants are in, which was published even before the show. Those extra contents play a role as paratexts, which forster meaning and fans' reactions, and these were almost-necessary elements for following the original text (Gray, 2010, p. 16, 196). In this sense, these enable more intense, more immediate engagement for fans (Gray, 2010, p. 196).

The participants, in addition, showed their positive engagement by leaving a comment on the relevant content. It was not only sharing their emotions and feelings but also sharing their experiences and concreting social bonding with other audiences and fans:

> I have read many comments, including reflection and appreciation for the dancers, especially on the last performance by Prowdman. They said that it was really good to see the performances that they had never seen, and… they also wrote about their personal experiences, for example, on the performance by Rachica. They said they felt supported when they saw the performance on diverse gender identities. It was very impressive that they shared their feelings and experiences in the comments.
> (Bom, 25 years old female unemployed, a fan)

Bom mentioned Prowdman, which had the theme of a drag queen for the mission they had to perform with male dancers (ep. 8). They chose the music *Womanifesto* by Jill Scott, presenting the message of support for women. This performance, and the performance by

Rachica in a similar context, which used the music *Born this way* by Lady Gaga, helped motivate this fan to engage with the theme of gender diversity (ep. 8).

The participants also showed their positive engagement by participating in the voting on the show. It had two different voting systems, and one was voting for the pre-released performance clips on YouTube, and the number of views and likes graded them. The other was only for the final episode, which was the only live broadcast, and the audiences voted by text message surveys. Both systems required the participants' time and energy investment. In the first one, they needed to watch the clips as much as possible and share the links with others to encourage them to participate in the voting. In addition, they had to catch up with the live broadcast in the second one. Furthermore, the participants tended to vote with their own strict criteria instead of voting for their favourite crews they were rooting for. Therefore, they paid close attention to watching the performances: 'I just wanted to root for the dancers by participating in voting whenever I can and telling others to vote' (Dara, 32 years old female teacher).

What drives their positive engagement with the contestants is, first of all, the similarity between the audiences and fans and the contestants. They have the same gender and similar social backgrounds as the same generation. It made them feel closer to the contestants, with more empathy, and it constructed an affective bond between them: 'I enjoyed watching dance, but also, I like there's many things that I can empathise. I'm also female, almost the same generation as the contestants.' (Jieun, 21 years old female student, a follower).

The second is the difference. The way contestants behaved, and their attitudes in the show differed from those socially required of Korean females and contestants in the competition show. Young females in Korea were required gendered ideals as beautiful, graceful, artistic, lithe, and family-oriented image (Kim, 2017, p. 302). In addition, working females were easily described as having self-destructive or self-erosive identities (Kim, 2012, p. 37). However, the contestants deconstructed the boundaries of social acceptability for females. At the same time, the contestants showed some image gap between when they are doing performances and when they are backstage. The audiences and fans enjoyed the process of finding out the gap because it gave them the feeling that they came to know who the contestants really were:

In the past, females were required to be always humble, like "No, no. I was just lucky.", but in this show, they were like, "Yes, I'm good. I did well." (…) There was a big gap in their image, and that's why I became to like them more. My friends did the same. You know, we love it. They are like on the stage, but different…
(Chaeyoung, 27 years old female student)

The genre of reality television has features that participants and audiences have multiple identities; therefore, the audiences enjoy the playoff between the authenticity and performance of the contestants (Hill, 2015, p. 52). According to Goffman, this can be interpreted as audiences' pleasure of understanding the gap between mediated contestants on the front stage and true contestants the backstage of the show. Still, the contestants backstage were shown through mediated space; they can be understood as the performed selves:

I thought I wanted to be like them because I know I can't. I am more like shy, too much thinking, hesitant to do something new, and care how others think about me, too much. However, the dancers on the show were more like they did what they wanted to, so they had courage and belief in themselves. This was what I've always admired.
(Dara, 32 years old female teacher, a fan)

In addition, Dara found the difference between herself and the contestants in the show. She saw the ideal attitudes she had dreamed of but could not have. However, she did not feel negative feelings from it; instead, she showed respect to them by expressing admiration. Here, respect stands for acknowledging the dignity of work by others, in this case, the participant (Sennett, 2003, p. 67).

Furthermore, it was the first reality show only on Korean female street dancers, and the contestants were also very new to the audience. The format of the genre of reality competition shows was not different from previous cases. However, it took the theme and contestants, rarely seen on TV, inspiring them to have more interest in the show:

They haven't touched upon the genre of dance. They have the previous show, *Dancing 9*. I loved it, but it was more like high culture, such as ballet and contemporary dance. I used to do the learn for fun. But this one even has popularity! I had no doubt in its success.
(Jisoo, 32 years old female student, a follower)

The show drew out the change in the perception of the genre of the reality competition show, and it can be understood as a part of 'genre work' (Hill, 2007), which is the process of audiences and fans collecting generic sources and contributing to what genres means (p. 109). Even the show's theme, dance was not new in reality competition shows; however, by narrowing down the genre to street dance and the gender of the contestants to female, the show constructed new perceptions of the genre of the show by fans.

Another interesting fact is that the participants showed repetitive engagement with the show by using social media. Those content on social media played a role as a 'paratext' (Gray, 2010) which means extra content besides the main content, the text. It is not only the added format of content but also added function to create new meanings and even change meanings in understanding the original content (Gray, 2010, p. 6). It also means that paratext can broader the perspectives to understand the context surrounding the main text, and it affects the spectrum of engagement eventually. For example, the participants created a communication channel, primarily for themselves, by using social media. They did not have specific online communities only for the show. Instead, they roamed (Hill, 2019) different social media platforms and engaged with them for different purposes:

> I read the comments on each clip and figured out what others think about the performances. I was like, "Oh, I missed the details of the dance, like a small hand gesture." and re-watched the clips again… and while I watched the live on my laptop, I texted with my friends on the messenger with my phone. I texted, "Did you see that!? Team Holybang nailed it today." and I also left some comments on social media like Twitter, instead of talking in-person, like "Aiki blew the stage today."
> (Jennie, 26 years old female freelance producer, a fan)

Jennie described how much she was positively searching for content on social media and interacting with it, such as commenting with other fans, re-watching and dividing their engagement practices by considering the affordance of each platform. This is because different platforms are materially and socially constructed with different affordances of limitations and possibilities, which connect to different engagement contexts (Frosh, 2019, p. 67). For example, they used Twitter and Instagram when they shared emotions and instant and simple reflections, and it showed affective engagement, including positive and negative at the same time. When they wanted a detailed understanding of the show, for example, the

dance techniques the contestants used in the performances, they chose YouTube since most of the dance analysis content is there because it is a video-based platform. When they wanted to know more about the contestants, they followed their Instagram accounts, read their postings and stories, and watched their live broadcasts.

The continuous engagement by the participants in this study with the relevant content on social media was connected to algorithms. Each social media has a different logic of its algorithms, and only a few are known in public. Therefore, it is difficult to define how each logic has affected their engagement; however, the participants agreed that they could see more content related to the show after they started watching it, especially after watching some relevant content on social media:

> I don't search them by myself, but the algorithm just shows me. (…) for example, the battle clips in the previous dance competitions.
> (Chaeyoung, 27 years old female student, a fan)

> Instagram already know that I'm female and in my '20s, so it keeps showing me content related to *SWF*. If I click one of them and watch it, it is repeated again and again.
> (Minzi, 32 years old female musician, an audience)

This continuous engagement with the relevant content on social media has influenced the participants until the research period in 2022, even though the show was broadcasted the previous year in 2021. The participants said they keep watching the content on the daily lives of the contestants, their dance battle clips in the past, and some dance-related clips. This can be understood as the algorithmic power of digital media platforms, which creates and increases user engagement, and affects follow-up reflections on content (Lind, 2020, pp. 162-163).

Some participants utilised OTT platforms, which means the Over the Top media service, to engage with the show. Korea showed a high usage rate in OTT, and 69.5% of Koreans used OTT platforms in 2021 (Lee, 2022).[3] Some Korean platforms have affordance in offering a

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[3] Over 34% of Koreans were paid subscribers to OTT platforms, and homegrown players Wavve and Tving had 4.4% each as their usage rate.

live stream of television broadcasts and chatting between the audiences: 'I can watch live streaming on the OTT I'm subscribing to. I could watch it with other subscribers by reading their comments in real-time, at the same time' (Bom, 25 years old female unemployed, a fan).

The participants who watched the show alone and wanted to share their reflections with others used messenger applications to have a chat with people they knew, such as friends and family. At the same time, they used the chatting function in the OTT platform while watching the live streaming. It became an efficient communication channel because it takes less time delay because they type while they are watching, and it is easier to understand which scene they are talking about, enabling direct and live engagement on the show.

Social media is a place where people can socialise and build up the group sociality, blurring the boundary between the private and the public (Miller et al., 2016, p. 10). In this sense, the participants felt closer bonding with the contestants by using social media: 'I used to tag the accounts of the contestants when I upload something related to *SWF* (…) If you tag someone, it sends a notification as a message. I could see when someone read it, and there were also some people who sent likes' (Dara, 32 years old female teacher, a fan). Dara found the connection with the contestants by tagging their names on social media. The notification of being tagged invites the contestants to have confirmation and assent, and the tagged names establish the online entanglement of fans and contestants (Frosh, 2019, pp, 115-116). Therefore, it implies that social media platforms function as a place for the micro engagement of the audiences and fans, which resituates subjective engagement at a micro-level through individual attachments (Bailey, 2005, p. 155).

On the other hand, the participants mentioned that the producers of Mnet have the skill to elevate the sub-culture genre to the mainstream culture. In the past, the genre of street dance used to be perceived as a sub-culture or low-quality culture in Korea, and a street dancer was not socially accepted as an occupation because it carried the image of extremely low job security (Kim, 2021). As a result, the audiences and fans of the show experienced the transition in their perception of the genre of street dance and the dancers:

> I believe that they have a clear vision to lead the trend of popular culture. When I first heard that they are taking the genre of street dance as the main theme, I was like, 'Wow'. I don't

know if I can call it B-graded, but.. I really liked that they are trying to promote the sub-culture genres in this way. I rooted for them for this reason.

(Jisoo, 32 years old female student, a follower)

They also complimented that the producers are skilled at producing gripping narratives and capturing attractive features of the contestants, and drawing them into the show. They still show negative engagement with the devil's edit, but they also understand why the producers have no choice but to stick with this editing style. They are open for the producers to use the proper level of the devil's edit, as long as it does not harm the casts: 'I was always like, "Wow, what is happening?" and surprised because their edit made things so interesting. I liked it.' (Jisoo, 32 years old female student, a follower)

Self-identification as fans

The fans in this study did not hesitate to identify themselves as a fan. Even the ones who identified themselves as a follower and audience were proactive in sharing their experiences and feelings with the show. They rarely paused to track back their engagement because they still remember most of them. There are various factors behind it, and the first is the social change in fandom culture. Fandom used to carry a negative image in Korea in the past, and it developed a stigma for people belonging to fandom that they are intemperate, anti-social, and decadent (Jeong, 2015).

That is the background why people started using the expression '덕밍아웃[deokming-out]', which is the combined word of '덕질[doek-jil]', which means 'fanboying or fangirling', and '커밍아웃(coming-out)', when they are open that they are a fan of something or someone. As the power of fandom gets stronger in South Korean popular culture based on the successfully globalised fandom culture, there was a gradual shift in perceptions of fans from the fanatic and problematic image to the images of people who express social and individual identity confidently (Berbiguier & Cho, 2017, pp. 274-275). It can be understood as the 'identity play' (Phillips & Milner, 2017) as fans in mediated spaces. Furthermore, online spaces such as social media offered more opportunities for constant play with the same frequency and help robust identity construction (Phillips & Milner, 2017, p. 67). Since the participants showed

their engagement with the show by actively using social media, it can be understood that social media played a significant role in robust establishment of fans identities.

The participants felt more open about identifying themselves as fans; however, they are cautious about leaving the records as fans on the Internet. Since they are aware that digital archives are sometimes difficult to control, there were the fans in the study avoided leaving comments online. This is because of the polarisation of online anonymity, and on one side, it points out the lack of accountability in dealing with sensitive information by adding that there are insufficient regulations for protecting anonymity (Sardá et al., 2019, p. 561).

The second factor is the social change in the genre of the street dance by the show. Similar to the previous stigma on fandom, street dance also had a stereotype of its generic features, such as emphasising uniqueness and freedom in the past in conservative Korean society (Park & Kim, 2022, p. 102). However, the show helped change this negative perception, and it led to a change in fans of *SWF* to identify themselves as fans of the street dance competition shows as well. The participants expressed that they admired the contestants and perceived them as role models. One of the distinctive characteristics of the contestants was strong confidence and self-esteem:

> It was admiration. In fact, it is not easy to succeed in this art field, and it requires so many efforts that we can't even imagine. They put efforts into only one field for a long time, and their endeavour, courage, and everything are amazing.
> (Bom, 25 years old female unemployed, a fan)

The contestants showed themselves not afraid of opening their thoughts and opinions in front of others in the show, and the participants embraced it, intensifying their practices of self-formation and fan identity work (Bailey, 2005, p. 49).

Negative engagement

On the other hand, the participants showed negative engagement with the show, especially with the agency of the producers. They criticised the producers for different reasons, such as the wrong casting of the fight judges, music selection, stage design, the devil's edit, and the competition system designed by them. This negative engagement was highly influenced by

the production history of reality competition shows by Mnet. They are not the first broadcaster of this genre; however, they are the top broadcaster in reality competition show production. Mnet produced the most popular and successful competition show in the Korean media industry, the *Superstar K* series. The producers of the show adapted the devil's edit in describing the contestants frequently and dramatically, and it showed the producers' power to do wrong and cause harm (Gray, 2021, p. 37). It was the start of the history of the devil's edit by Mnet, and they didn't stop this editing style in the production of reality competition shows. For more than the last ten years, they produced other successful reality competition shows in a row, such as *Show me the money* and *Produce 101*. As they produced more, the audience experienced the devil's edit more:

> I don't like them, really. I even don't like the fact they are still popular. It irritates me that they keep producing competition shows after they got punished by manipulating the voting result. They have no fear since the shows they make always get viral. Maybe that's why they don't feel the need for regret.
> (Chaelin, 28 years old female salesperson, a follower)

Moreover, the worst scandal in the genre of reality competition shows in Korea occurred in 2019. Some of the fans of the series show *Produce 101* filed a lawsuit against Mnet on charges of obstruction of business and fraud for manipulating votes of the seasons. It cost 100 KRW (0.081 USD) per vote, and the fourth season scored 1,3630,000 votes. Of this scandal, the project boy band group called X1, consisting of the winners of the fourth season, was disbanded only three months after their first album release. In 2021, the sentences of the producers were finalised, and the main producers received prison sentences and fines as well (Dong, 2021). It established controversy related to Mnet continuing its production of reality competition shows. In the end, it resulted in the audiences and fans losing their trust in the producers of Mnet and trained them to be more critical of themselves, especially industry attitudes toward audiences.

> Even though the show described them in that way, I should have thought 'maybe not.' I have never wanted to be a native audience who easily believes what the show shows. As an educated person, I should have filtered those things, but I ended up thinking in a way that the producers wanted me to have.
> (Jisoo, 32 years old female student, a follower)

They evaluated themselves as the audience with critical perspectives, feeling bored and irritated when they saw the devil's edit in the show because they had already experienced it enough. This is because their identities as audiences and fans were articulated and performed with negative expressions (Gray, 2021, p. 211). They think of themselves as skilled audiences who can watch the show critically, identifying which scenes are exaggerated by Mnet, using the devil's edit.

The participants in this study looked back at their engagement and were critical of themselves. Gray (2021) explained this phenomenon as 'the dislikes themselves', and it stands for the healthy audience for bad media (p. 242). He adds that audiences want to find and cultivate new dislikes because displeasure from dislikes can be a source of pleasure (Gray, 2021, p. 242). In this case, the object for their criticism became themselves:

> Now, we are not just being passive anymore. We can tell the difference between the truth and false. I know how to understand the real relationship between the contestants by looking up the information by myself, for example, on Instagram. I was not just accepting the information the show provided but searching the information on my side and creating something new.
>
> (Bom, 25 years old female unemployed, a fan)

Their cognitive engagement is based on the participants' assumption that they are better than the producers when it comes to an understanding the show. They pointed out the lack of knowledge of the producers, and they perceived that the producers are the ones who need to study and understand the dance scenes before proceeding with the production. This cognitive engagement was transferred to affective engagement in the sense that the participants felt negative emotions since they believed that the producers failed to perform their duty in their jobs. This can be understood that they went through the process of rethinking how to define textuality and audiencehood on the show and eventually found the legitimacy of dislike (Gray, 2021, p. 27).

For example, they showed cognitive engagement by criticising the qualification of the judges who are called 'fight judges'. There were three judges, two of them were singers, and one was a choreographer, mainly for the K-pop dance. Since none of them was professional in street

dance nor at least had experience in dance competitions, participants in this study perceived them unqualified as judges who have the power to decide the winner of dance battles and grade the performances by the professional street dance crews:

> I don't understand why they were cast. It would be much better if the judges were also the street dancers.
> (Chaeyoung, 27 years old female student, a fan)

> I like Taeyong, but I don't think he's qualified to be a fight judge (...) BoA, she is also good at dancing and experienced, however... I got a message from the producers that a dancer and an idol are different, but they had the judges all from SM Entertainment...
> (Heedo, 25 years old female unemployed, a fan)

In the beginning, they criticised the judges; however, they changed the subject of their criticism from the judges to the producers. They believed that the producers had more responsibility because they were the ones who designed the show and recruited the judges:

> There were like a fly in the ointment (…) in the beginning; I was very irritated by them, but in the end, I could notice that they also didn't want to be in the position of judging the contestants, so… I began to start 'yes maybe, they also didn't want to be the judges of this show.'
> (Bom, 25 years old female unemployed, a fan)

The show initially aimed to change the perception of street dancers as backup dancers only supporting celebrities. However, the participants pointed out that the producers designed the missions so that the contestants could not be in the spotlight. For example, in the mega crew mission, each crew had to invite other dancers by themselves, with a production guideline that they could ask anyone they wanted. Some crews considered including celebrities in their mega crew, utilising the influence of the celebrities to get more votes for their performances. As a result, some crews invited celebrities who could bring some advantages in getting more votes. However, the participants did not criticise their decision; instead, they blamed the producers who designed the guide, which can cause controversy. There was another mission with celebrities in the final stage. The show tried to describe good narratives that they made music for finalist crews, however, the musicians showed up on the stage, and the cameras missed some parts of the dance performance to shoot them instead. It resulted in the

participants being disappointed with the final stage, and they perceived that it was the fault of the producers who led the crews to choose to be sub-performers again:

> At some point, I got a question, 'why are they giving the missions that make the dancers look like backup dancers, even though the show keeps saying the dancers are the main.' I think there were too many missions related to K-POP, and each music track was originally customised for the artists. It was not planned for the street dancers, and I wondered why they had to pull it off.
> (Jieun, 21 years old female student, a follower)

It can be understood that the producers valued the powerful influence of celebrities that can rule the capital game with its 'saleability' (Elliott, 2018, p. 12, 47). From this, the participant Jieun noticed the gap between what the show aimed to achieve at the beginning and what the show had done for the contestants. As a result, she obtained negative feelings in the sense that this disagreement was not supportive of the contestants.

The producers were also criticised for using too much K-pop, which the contestants were not used to performing with. The producers might have aimed to broaden the music selection on purpose and show more diversity. In this context, the participants noticed the commercial intentions of producers by using the strong influence of the genre of K-pop. It is visually stunning, with a cosmopolitan openness image, and it can import international audiences and online fandom with its increasing economic value on social media (Kim, 2022, p. 14, 16). Therefore, it has the power to improve ratings:

> I sensed the difference between the music the show suggested to the contestants and the music the contestants selected when they could. (…) maybe the contestants and producers aimed something different from the show.
> (Bom, 25 years old female unemployed, a fan)

In addition, the producers were criticised for their recruitment of one contestant called Chaeyeon from the crew Want, as she was not a professional street dancer and had no experience in the dance scene either. She was from the idol girl's band IZ*ONE. The producers described Chaeyeon as the main character, portraying her as an image of a victim, disrespected by others and overcoming the challenges. In this process, other contestants were

described as villains (Ha, 2021). However, the participants, including Chaeyoung, did not put a focus on the idol contestant; instead, they focused on the producers who tried to draw these narratives on her by using others: 'Chaeyeon could have been criticised a lot because she's just an idol, and they had the fight judges of singers?' (Chaeyoung, 27 years old female student, a fan). Producers were criticised for editorial manipulation and the design of the missions and casting.

The target of criticism stayed on the producers. Although participants in this study criticised the ones who sparked the controversial issues in reality, outside of the show, they did not look down on the talent of the contestants. Instead, they used the expression '악마의 재능[Agmaui Jaeneung]', translated to 'the talent gifted by the devil', which is used to describe a talented person but with a bad personality and morals. In this way, the participants did not stop giving credit to the dancers while criticising the producers who did not filter those contestants in casting.

On the other hand, participants in this study wanted the show to offer them knowledge of street dance; however, the producers did not meet their anticipation, and they even provided wrong information, for example, by writing wrong subtitles of the terms frequently used in street dance scenes. It was the audiences and fans who found the errors and required the producers to make them right. Their commitment to finding and correcting information by themselves offered them social reasons to keep engaging with the show, even though they had negative affections (Gray, 2021, p. 28):

> I think it was modified later… There's a scene where the host Daniel said 'back-off', 'back-off', and it is a very common filler word in street dance; however, the subtitle was 'back-up', 'back-up'. The producers noticed it later, so they changed it.
> (Jennie, 26 years old female freelance producer).

From this negative experience, participants chose other social media channels, as the affordances of social media helped drive their negative engagement and backlash towards the show:

I have watched some clips on a YouTube channel run by a street dancer. There was a series of clips analysing the battles and performances of *SWF*. It was really fun to get to know the meaning and symbols of dance from it. I would never know if I only watched the show.

(Stella, 28 years old female student, a fan)

For example, the audiences and fans chose substitute channels with performance analysis clips and comments by other professional street dance YouTubers such as '*Alzana the feels*'[4], '*J. Black & J. Pink*'[5], and '*Ruda's Dance Lab*'[6]. The style of the performance analysis was different depending on the channels. For example, the channel '*Alzana the feels*' and '*Ruda's Dance Lab*' conducted the micro-level analysis by watching the performance clips frame by frame. It focused on explaining the knowledge, such as the name and the level of the dance skills, the formation transition, and the harmonisation of the music and dance. On the other hand, the channel '*J. Black & J. Pink*' watched the performance at once and shared overall reflections. He added some background on each contestant, such as their career and the awards they have achieved:

I have watched the performance analysis clips a lot. (…) When I only watched the performance, I felt it was new and amazing, but after I watched the analysis clip on it, I could follow what are the missing points in the performance, which were difficult to control since the music didn't have a clear melody.

(Jieun, 21 years old female student, a follower)

By watching their clips, the participants re-watched dance performances which are the most iconic scenes of the show. This re-watching practice enables a different type of pleasure of certainty because the audiences already know what will happen, but it still makes them be involved in the mood of joy (Shuster, 2022, p. 23).

In specific, the channel '*J. Black & J. Pink*' shared the knowledge of dance battle rules, such as both contestants in a battle always use the same music and etiquette, such as touching each other while dancing is not allowed, which was frequently shown in the show. In addition, he gave the opposite opinions to the results of some battles, decided by the fight judges of the

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[4] Alzana the feels (2022). Available at: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHlVIHYck6YLFk2vcIF9S4
[5] J. Black & J. Pink (2022). Available at: https://www.youtube.com/c/JBLACKJPINKOfficial
[6] Ruda's Dance Lab (2022). Available at: https://www.youtube.com/c/RudaKris/videos

show. These channels led the audiences and fans to broaden their perspectives on the show and eventually offered the audiences and fans more sources to fuel the backlash of the show.

This explains the reason for the engagement that the audiences and fans started to produce re-created clips analysing the devil's edit. They analysed scenes frame by frame, using screenshots and zoom-in. They sometimes utilised the special released clips such as behind the scenes clips produced by the producers and the live broadcast on Instagram by the contestants and found the connection of the authentic narratives of the contestants. Even those not producing the re-created content joined the process by producing sub-content such as comments and sharing the links with others. As 'produsers', who produce and use media content at the same time (Lind, 2020, p. 2), they made social media a discussion space for the backlash of the show.

Furthermore, the research found that negative engagement surrounding the paratext transformed into disengagement:

> I don't think I have watched the content about the devil's edit. It's irritating me. It's always on the feed as recommended content with some trolling titles. That's why I rarely watch YouTube, but I have watched it these days because of *SWF*. I tried to avoid that kind of content because I'm sick of it now.
> (Heedo, 26 years old female unemployed)

As described in the previous section, social media functioned as a paratext encouraging audiences and fans' active engagement with the show. However, the participants in the study showed that they disengaged with the negative discourse constructed by paratext when they experienced too frequent negative engagement. As Heedo mentioned, they felt bored of watching the content criticising the devil's edit from their articulated experience of watching other cases. Even though they knew about the significance of critical content surrounding the show and they were strongly critical of the devil's edit, it led them to decide to avoid those content.

2) Gender representation

The show was favourably reviewed by some participants in the sense that it offered different types of femininity and deconstructed old-fashioned negative gender representation of females in media. The show presented different female leader types through the crew leaders. It has influenced the female audiences and fans in this study, and it was even utilised as a background source for representing a female character in the popular Korean drama *twenty-five, twenty-one*[7] (Baek, 2022). However, it was also strongly criticised for its gender bias.

Criticism of negative gender representation of female contestants

The show was highly criticised by the participants for the negative representation of female street dancers in the show. There are several factors that led them to sensitively find and react to the negative gender representations.

First of all, this type of representation of females can be perceived as a cliché. As a recent case, *Unpretty Rapstar*, with the contestants consisting of Korean female rappers, had three seasons from 2015 to 2016, produced by Mnet (Jo, 2016). A memorable scene in the Korean reality competition show relates to one of the contestants, Jessi, saying, "We are not a team. This is a competition" (ep. 2). Not only this scene but also the show repeatedly showed the conflicts between the contestants in an exaggerated way, using dramatic background music:

> I was not going to watch it when I only watched its trailer because it gave me a similar impression to the show *Unpretty Rapstar*. It focused too much on the negative image of female rappers that they are scary, too strong, too sharp, and easy to be involved in conflicts… so I didn't want to start watching *SWF*.
> (Chaelin, 28 years old female salesperson, a follower)

These negative representations were shown in other cases, such as the first and third seasons of the *Produce 101* series, which had female contestants who dreamed of being members of an idol band. The show described some of the contestants as disrespectful, selfish, and greedy, asserting the power of the show by categorising contestants (Pedwell, 2014, p. 95).

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[7] The actress mentioned that she studied her character in the drama by watching the leaders in *SWF*, such as Honey. J, Monica, and Leejung. "They have strong confidence in their job. I admired their leadership and charisma. I think it will make the character more attractive if I reflect those points when I perform.".

This negative representation of female contestants repeated over the history of reality competition shows in Korea; the audiences and fans in this study anticipated a change for *SWF*, but the show did not fulfil their anticipation.

The second point is contrast. The female street dancers were rarely seen on TV shows; at the same time, their behaviours and attitudes as females were also rarely seen on TV. Therefore, the participants anticipated the show to have new narratives, edits, and styles with less gender bias. However, their anticipation was not fulfilled because the producers mostly pursued the typical ways they have used in other shows: 'They still tried to describe the competition of female dancers to look like females' competition or just fight. I really didn't like it' (Chaelin, 28 years old female salesperson, a follower).

Another reason is producers' lack of understanding of the social change in Korea regarding the perception of gender roles, especially of females required and accepted in the society. The social atmosphere in females' competition has changed, but the show didn't follow the speed of this change fast enough. In specific, the participants felt a social change in the perception of 'professional females.' Korean society used to negatively perceive females who have outstanding performances in their work because it was perceived as challenging males' authority (Han & Choi, 2021, p. 3). Based on the historical context, they were required to pursue the biased gender role mainly influenced by Confucianism, with the unequal power between gender (Han & Choi, 2021, p. 3). However, the biased gender roles have been dramatically deconstructed in recent years as the education, and social status of females have improved (Han & Choi, 2021, p. 3).

In addition, the audiences experience the change in perception of 'competing females.' As described as the negative representation of females on reality competition shows, females who actively participated in competitions used to carry negative impressions in Korea. Even when they were situated in competitions, they needed to win; they were required to be humble, hiding their ambition. It was not socially accepted in Korea, and people used to use the expressions such as '기가 세다[giga seda]' and '드세다[deu-seda]' toward females who did not follow the socially required personalities. Those two expressions cannot be directly translated into English but generally stand for a characteristic of being stubborn, assertive, and bossy regardless of gender. However, Korean society has been using them only for

females. This is because males were rather allowed to have this characteristic, and even it was encouraged to have it, while it was less allowed to females. Participants described the female contestants as follows:

> What I liked the most was that the show destroyed the old concept of 'Strong female'. People used to be negative about females who do not hide their opinions and try their best in competition. *SWF* made a change in their thoughts like it's something called 'professional'.
> (Chaelin, 28 years old female salesperson, a follower)

According to Napoli (2011), the audiences are socially constructed, and they change over time, followed by the social and political ramifications (p. 3). This social change directly influences audiences and fans because they face it in their everyday lives, and sometimes, they become the major agency that can lead to cultural and social change.

Compared to them, the producers lacked the skills to catch up with the social change. Even though they had a female producer[8] in the 30s (Lee, 2021), her perspective could not include the standpoint of females in the same generation enough since she has worked as a reality show producer for more than 12 years at Mnet. In addition. since this negative representation of the female dancers was made mainly by the devil's edit, the audiences and fans proactively tried to find the information to refute the representation by the edited scenes:

> The only thing better without was the devil's edit. (…) They made it like a girls' fight, and I was like, "again?"
> (Stella, 28 years old female student, a fan)

> When each crew gave their reflection on others, the show described them like they were focusing more on the visuals and appearance than the dance. They also made the competition look more like they were jealous of each other. I felt these were too typical.
> (Bom, 25 years old female student, a fan)

Some participants criticised the show:

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[8] Producer Choi started her career with the talent show 'Superstar K' as an assistant director in 2009 and produced various reality shows at Mnet.

There were so many identities that the show could describe. It can be identity as a dancer, as a female, as a teacher, professor, student… There were a lot because each contestant had different roles and positions, but the show focused more on the gender of females than each contestant as a person. I think the show was supposed to show the contestants as dancers, not females, but what they showed was just females.

(Minzi, 32 years old female musician, an audience)

Minzi did not want to limit the contestants' identity as a category of gender, maintained through the ubiquity of gender performativity (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020, p. 169). However, the contestants were frequently described only as of the females in the competition. The audiences and fans in the study also pointed out that the show did not portray the professional identity of a street dancer enough, even though it was taken as the central theme of the show. They argued that the show could have shown their professional identities as artists, established with human creativity and achievement (Thornton, 2013, p. 3): 'I think it will be quite different when they produce the next season, *SMF*. They tried to show competing females too often, too much on *SWF*, and it was very disappointing' (Heedo, 26 years old female unemployed, a fan).

3) Social media as a catalyst

In this complex playoff among the main agencies of *SWF*, the study put a focus on the social media platforms since they were repeatedly mentioned by the participants of the study. Social media on the web and other digital platforms have allowed people to create and share a number of materials (Freedman, 2014, p. 111). In this context, the study investigated the relationship between social media and contemporary power relations (Freedman, 2014, p. 111).

Empowerment and social media

The devil's edit has the power to change the narratives and representation of each contestant, and it affects the perception of the audiences and fans in this study. The producers made some changes in the way of using the edit as a result of the fan and audience backlash. The power dynamic shifted according to the change in producer intervention, contestants' performance, and audience engagement (Hill, 2015, p. 134). The increase in social media use

has influenced the growth of fan power. The contestants and audiences, and fans had close communication on social media, for example, through Instagram live broadcasts. The contestants used social media as a powerful communication space that the producers could not invade. The audiences and fans now have more opportunities to know about the behind stories, which are not manipulated by the producers directly from the contestants on social media. In addition, they can have a role as creators on social media, such as producing re-created content. Fans have empowered themselves using the power of online spaces and social media by increasing their everyday fan practice, such as creating fan-generated content (Geraghty, 2015, p. 17). Beyond being proactive audiences and fans, they were the 'produsers' (Lind, 2020) on social media, which could also make a change in the narratives surrounding the show. Therefore, it displays that their power has increased through social media.

Most of the reality competition shows produced by Mnet had non-celebrities who dreamed of being celebrities in a different genre. That is one of the reasons why the competition shows by Mnet used dramatic narratives of the contestants, starting from the amateur to the successful celebrity:

> There were usually people who wanted to be a singer and celebrities, and the shows were about the competition between them. However, the contestants in *SWF* are the ones who already have a high reputation in their field, and it was a competition between them. That was very new.
> (Bom, 25 years old female unemployed, a fan).

In contrast, the contestants on *SWF* already possessed power from their original social-professional position; therefore, they had more power to speak about their experience in the show, using social media to share their personal thoughts. In this sense, producers, contestants, and audiences in reality competition shows were aware that social media could perform a powerful influence on shows; at the same time, it was risky to create controversy on the show.

Audiences and fans in this study felt the use of the devil's edit changed from one episode to another as a result of the backlash, and fan feedback made a direct change to the show. At the same time, the producers began to predict the negative engagement of the audience and fans,

using this to drive social media. In addition, producers promoted the strong influence of the contestants through their 'celebritization' (Cashmore, 2006), which stands for 'achievement-base fame towards media-driven renown' (p. 7):

> I think they cared about the audience and reflected some points on the show. I felt some difference in their editing styles at the beginning and the end. (…) The producers noticed that people liked those gaps and minimised the devil's edit. They were supposed to show more conflict with devil's edit if they kept their typical styles.
> (Jennie, 26 years old female freelance producer, a fan)

Except for a few contestants, *SWF* was their first time being on TV shows; therefore, they were perceived as non-celebrities. However, the show became viral after its first episode release; the contestants received many spotlights from the public. As the show became more popular, the contestants became more like celebrities. It shows the process of celebritization and social media worked as a communicative place to empower the contestants (Elliott, 2018, p. 170, 172). Therefore, their influence also became stronger when the contestants mentioned the show on other shows and social media, as they gained more power as celebrities.
In the contemporary Korean context, celebrity culture has a strong parasocial relationship between celebrities and fans by idealising others and constructing familial affection (Elliott, 2018, p. 190). As a result, the producers might have no choice but to decrease the devil's edit to minimise the potential risk that the contestants can occur when they feel offended.

This change in the use of the devil's edit can be understood as the push-pull dynamic (Hill, 2015). The power shift occurred in a complex way as the devil's edit changed into a more ambiguous style so that the audiences and fans could not easily criticise it:

> I feel it is getting trickier. For example, I don't think the producers did the typical devil's edit on the dancer Monica. Instead, they made moments that the audiences could feel like 'Hmm' and made them think of her as an over-confident dancer and a scary leader. I didn't like it.
> (Chaelin, 28 years old female salesperson, a follower)

The producers also actively utilised it as marketing tools, such as for voting, trailers, and encouragement of paratexts across media for commercial branding and fan interpretive strategies, and led the fans to become paratextual consumers (Mittell, 2015, pp. 101-102).

In the past, Mnet used to design the voting system on their official website or some social media pages. Hence, the audience needed to get through complicated steps to create an account on the broadcaster's website. However, they chose YouTube this time, which enables easy access to voting because the biggest audience group of the show, females in their 20's and 30's in Korea, show a high usage rate, 97% and 98% each on YouTube in 2021.[9]

Not only the platform for voting but also the format of voting was different. Previous cases had a board with the list of the contestants' names and their profile pictures, and the audiences could vote by clicking one of them. In contrast, in *SWF*, the audiences could vote by watching the performance clips because the number of views of each clip was automatically counted as the vote. The audience could add more votes by clicking the likes button of each clip. In other words, it has different objects for voting, the performance clips for *SWF*, and the contestants for other shows. In this way, the voting system for *SWF* gave the impression to the audiences and fans that they could contribute to the show through the accessible and fair voting system because the audiences could pay more attention to the evaluation of the performances, not the personal preferences of the contestants, leading the audiences and fans to actively intervene in constructing the authenticity of the show (Yoon, 2011, p. 21) within the context of Mnet voting scandals.

In the past, the audiences of Korean reality competition shows have complained about the fairness of the voting system because people tend to vote for different reasons, even irrelevant to the quality of performances and skills. Therefore, it was anticipated that this could solve the fairness issues in the voting system. However, the audiences and fans of *SWF* still had complaints about its fairness, but their reason was different. They perceived that all the contestant dance crews of the show were talented and showed outstanding performance. Therefore, it was difficult for them to notice the difference in the quality of the dance performances, so they thought every crew had the potential to win. In addition, the audiences and fans of *SWF* voted with objective and rational criteria:

> I made my decision after watching all the performances. (…) I watched all the performances by all crews but only liked the videos that I felt they did very well.

[9] Gallup (2021) Media, content, and social media usage report 미디어·콘텐츠·소셜 네트워크 서비스 이용률, 한국갤럽조사연구소. Available at: https://www.gallup.co.kr/gallupdb/reportContent.asp?seqNo=1205.

(Jennie, 26 years old female freelance producer, a fan)

I had my own criteria in my mind and voted for the crew that had more persuasive performance relevant to the topic.
(Heedo, 26 years old female unemployed, a fan)

Nevertheless, they still criticised that the voting system on social media has limitations that people vote for more known street dance genres. Street dance has diverse sub-genres, and each contestant crew had a specialised genre. The sub-genres have different levels of popularity among people, and it was controversial that the crews doing less-known genres usually got the lowest votes. In this sense, the participants noticed another type of issue in the fairness of the voting system of *SWF*:

The crews more famous on social media had advantages in getting more votes. It was tricky.
(Jisoo, 32 years old female student, a follower)

I was worried that if people felt this performance was good or not because it wasn't a popular genre. (…) When Prowdmon did the drag queen concept, it was not delivered to the audience enough. I was sad.
(Heedo, 26 years old female unemployed, a fan)

According to Kim (2011), these limitations found in the show reflect the limits of the competition system and justice (p. 60). As both participants mentioned, voting does not guarantee fair results.

In addition, Mnet attracted audiences and fans to their social media channels by releasing special clips such as behind the scenes and highlighted scenes, only available on YouTube, for example, to maximise profit:

I rarely use YouTube because there is too much provocative content (…) too violent, but it recommends me that kind of content by algorithms without my choice. I even deleted the application, but the only reason why I reinstalled it is to watch *SWF* clips in high quality (…) Since they showed pre-released and behind clips only on YouTube, I had no choice but to watch them.
(Heedo, 26 years old female unemployed, a fan)

The producers controlled the audiences and fans by limiting the channels for extra content. The participants were aware that the backlash by the devil's edit and the recreated content criticising it ended up increasing their engagement with the show, for example, tracking back to the original scenes of the show or monitoring the following episodes with critical perspectives:

> In the beginning, some used to think, "what's wrong with her?" and "why does she talk like that rude?" and others used to refute like "That is not true" and "There's something more behind." This actually makes them watch the related scenes again and again. I thought the producers were very clever because they have the chain of generating rumours and controversies, leading reputation, and making audiences watch the show.
> (Chaeyoung, 27 years old female student, a fan)

<u>Summary</u>

To sum up, this chapter demonstrates several key findings from the interviews. First of all, the research showed the active audience's and fan's positive engagement, especially with the contestants. It was shown across different platforms, and it included diverse types of micro engagement such as tagging, watching, re-watching, commenting, and recommendation. Next, the research found a high degree of negativity from the audiences and fans in the study. They showed a high degree of criticism on the frequent adaptation of K-pop, celebrities, and idols to the production of the show in the sense the producers intended to bring the commercial values from them. In addition, the research found that the show contained negative gender representation of the female contestants. It was portrayed in a gender-biased way by adapting the devil's edit, and it became the background as to why the participants were positively engaged with the contestants. In addition, there were close relations between fans and audiences, contestants and producers of the show, and social media platforms. Each agency evolved to 'empowerment' (Andrejevic, 2004 & Napoli, 2011), affected by the affordance of social media when it comes to the ongoing push-pull dynamic (Hill, 2015) of their power relation. In specific, it found the producers using the power of social media; at the same time, the audiences and fans performing as 'produsers' (Lind, 2022) in creating 'paratext' (Gray, 2010), providing new meaning surrounding the show as the main text. As a result, the negativity showing how they actively but negatively engaged with the show and

the criticism of negative gender representation on the show affected the audiences and fans to be more open about belonging to fandom, and it was proved their self-identification as fans.

5. Conclusion

Based on the key findings of this audience and fan study, this thesis has answered the following research questions based on the qualitative interview method and theories and concepts of 'the spectrum of engagement' (Hill, 2019), 'paratext' (Gray, 2010), 'produsers' (Lind, 2020), 'empowerment' (Andrejevic, 2004 &Napoli, 2011) and 'push-pull dynamic' (Hill, 2015) and closes the research by suggesting other points for discussion, looking back at the limitations, and sharing ideas for further studies.

1) In what ways do the audiences and fans positively and negatively engage with the Korean reality competition show *SWF* (2021)?
2) How do the audiences and fans critically reflect on the backlash towards the devil's edit regarding the negative representation of female street dancers by *SWF* producers?
3) How can this backlash be understood in the power relations on social media between the audiences and fans, contestants, and producers of *SWF*?

Clear division of engagement: Positive with the contestants & Negative with the producers

The audiences and fans in this study showed a clear division of the types of engagement with each agent. They positively engaged with the contestants, such as fighting against anti-fans online, participating in the voting system, establishing affective bonding, and following up the extra content as positive 'paratext' (Gray, 2010). On the contrary, they performed strong negativity in their engagement with the producers. They criticised the unqualified fight judges, the missions with celebrities, too frequent use of K-pop, casting an idol contestant and a lack of understanding by the producers. However, the focus of this criticism was not on the controversial objects or events; instead, it was always on the producers. This clear division of engagement offers a further understanding of audiences and fans. In this study, they have achieved strong and fixed preferences and obtained sufficient logic to explain their engagement practices. It enables the understanding of audiences and fans as 'the more they experience, the more skilled they are', and skilled audiences and fans have concrete criteria for deciding their engagement, and they achieve 'superiority' as elitist audiences and fans (Gray, 2021. p. 187).

The gap between the audiences and fans, and producers in understanding the gender context

The audiences and fans in the study criticised the producers for not understanding the change in the social atmosphere and perception of gender context in Korea. They showed a high degree of criticism when it comes to the negative gender representation of the female contestants, and this high degree originated from the generic feature of Reality TV. Reality TV contains both elements of authenticity and creativity, and it is significant to balance the tension between them (Ouellette, 2014, p. 6). Otherwise, the audience and fans are confused and sceptical of authenticity in reality TV. In this context, the study suggests that the adaption of the devil's edit to portray stereotyped gender image lowers the production value of content and has the risk create the 'illusion of authenticity' (Andrejevic, 2004, p. 16). Following this, the negative gender representation of "Women's enemy is women" that the audiences and fans found the gap with their recent experience and perception in reality "Women's supporters are women", and the gap brought them negative reactions shown by strong and sensitive criticism against it. The gap also means the difference between the gender context in reality that the audiences and fans have experienced and the mediated gender that the producers depicted in the show. As a result, the research shows that reality TV, which does not reflect the change in reality enough, nor with over-manipulated reality, can obtain a negative reputation.

Empowering agencies and extending push-pull dynamic

This study revealed the active power dynamics among the key agencies: producers, contestants, audiences, and fans, and it extended the concept of the push-pull dynamic (Hill, 2015) to the agent of a contestant, the key agent in the genre of reality competition shows. The power conflict was more than between producers and audiences, and fans. The research also shows the current and potential role of social media as a platform for the empowerment of agencies (Andrejevic, 2004 & Napoli, 2011). This study investigated social media as a site for producing and reading the paratext (Gray, 2010). In specific, the audiences and fans could play double roles as producers and audiences at the same time, which is called 'produser' (Lind, 2020). The position as a produser imposed the power as a creator, and in this way, the audiences and fans evolved. Other agencies also paid attention to the advantages of the affordance of social media. As all the agencies empowered themselves at the same time, the

power relationships among them became to have more complicated mechanisms. It produced the synergy when the interests of different agencies coincided; for example, the contestants and audiences and fans, both having backlash against the producers, showed strong 'affective alliances' (Lewis, 1992), which affected their activities, and practices and identity position (p. 59). In this context, this study provided the findings on how the identities of each agency transformed in the power dynamic. As a result, the study has values of its contribution to developing the power dynamic studies in media, relating to identity work, and explaining the current mechanism. In addition, it provided contemporary sources for fan studies regarding the identification of fans over the stigma of fandom.

Discussion

It is going to be more difficult for producers to continue the devils' edit in reality competition shows because audiences and fans have begun to find other creative ways to fight against it. Even though the producers at Mnet still stick to using the devil's edit, the contestants and fans show more evolved ways to fight against it after the show *SWF*. For instance, in *Queendom* season 2, a performance competition show between the Korean female idol bands, the idol band VIVIZ, one of the contestant groups, showed creative resistance against the devil's edit. They showed the texts describing their true feelings and thoughts using the phone screens so that the producers could not perform editorial manipulation. Their fandom also supported them by offering some decorations the contestants could show to the camera, with the text explaining what they were doing and thinking in real (Choi, 2022). It began with the show trying to adapt the devil's edit again in episode 0, which was special released content before the start of the show. The contestants and their fandom noticed it, and they blocked the possibility that the scenes could be distorted in a way the producers wanted to portray them in a creative way. This change of resisting the devil's edit shows the audiences and fans as 'pathfinders' (Hill, 2019) in the push-pull dynamic, and it is a practical resistance for potential contestants for reality competition shows in the further fandom.

On the other hand, it is controversial how much producers can be involved in drawing on the narratives in reality shows. Producers of reality shows have been criticised a lot by audiences for their strong involvement and control of casts and significant factors such as the voting scandals on *Produce* series. However, it is also problematic that producers are rarely involved. For example, the dating reality show *I am SOLO* (2021) in Korea was imposed

sanctions by Korea Communications Standards Commission (Hong, 2022). They explained that it was because one of the cast behaved too rude and sometimes violent against others, but the producers did not stop the situation. Therefore, there needs to be further discussion on how much producers of reality shows can control and intervene in the narratives and how to balance authenticity. In addition, it also emphasises the importance of the fair treatment of contestants, as well as producers. Honey. J, one of the contestants on *SWF*, said, "The first dance battle was called 'No respect' battle, but what we actually did was 'respect' battle." (Jang, 2021), and it implies the ideal attitude of a contestant, treating each other with respect.

Limitations and further research

Although the researcher has experience in conducting interviews and qualitative data analysis, having an additional researcher would have increased the reliability of the research by going through the process of developing codes by comparing them and approaching them from different approaches (Bazeley, 2013, p. 151). In addition, the research has some limitations from the video call interviews compared to having in-person face to face interviews. This interview format has the mixed advantages and disadvantages of both telephone interviews and face-to-face interviews. It enabled very quick and cheap data collection and the use of visual prompts (Jensen, 2012, p. 243). It was more difficult to establish rapport with the participants compared to the in-person interviews. In addition, there was a technical issue in one of the interviews. It was an issue from the side of the interviewee; therefore, it was difficult to help her to fix the problem. It ended up with choosing a different video call software, which was not expected. In this sense, the researcher should have asked the interviewee to check if everything works well in advance, not only checking it on the side of the researcher. Lastly, the research could not see how the audience and fan engagement and empowerment are performed in other cases since it is focused on the specific case. Therefore, there needs to be further study to understand the audiences of reality competition shows in a broader context.

This research suggests potential research topics and methods that can be studied in the future. First of all, it shows the significance of further studies on the devil's edit and Korean audiences and fandom of the reality competition show. This research only focused on female audiences and fans of the show, only with female contestants because their engagement showed more distinctive features compared to the males. That is why the sample was limited

to the female audiences, and it enabled understanding from the female perspectives. However, the next season of the show will only have male street dancers as contestants; therefore, studying the next season as a case study from the male audience's perspective will broaden the understanding of Korean audiences' engagement with the dance reality competition show. Furthermore, it will have meaningful implications to study how the devil's edit is employed on male contestants and how male audiences and fans engage with this backlash. It will enable the understanding of male audiences and fans' backlash on the uneven treatment of contestants by producers.

In addition, the research implies the need for further studies on audiences and fans using different platforms for their engagement with different agencies. In specific, some of them used OTT platforms instead of watching traditional television, and they also combined social media in their viewing experience in this research. In this process, they utilized different devices. They can be understood as 'roamers' who move across entertainment platforms (Hill & Lee, 2021). In this sense, further studies on Korean audiences using different platforms and devices to watch reality shows will broaden the understanding of roaming audiences. Since Korea has a distinctive feature that it has a high usage rate and the competition between global platforms and domestic platforms is aggressive (Shin & Park, 2021 & Song, 2021), it would be valuable academic finding to find the different roamers.

Above all, this research also implies the need for production studies on the producers of the genre of Korean reality competition shows. In specific, when it comes to the discussion of the devil's edit, which is one of the biggest parts consisting of the genre, understanding producers' aim and objectives and their working environment are important. In this sense, production studies are needed to understand the experiences, observations, and interactions in media production, from the perspective of media makers (Banks et al., 2016, p. 10).

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Appendices

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Appendix 1: Interview invitation

The invitation was written in Korean, since the research needed to have Korean participants for the interviews. The format of invitation, as an image file, was effective to deliver it from persons to persons since they could easily save the file and forward it to someone else.

Appendix 2: Consent form

Informed Consent Form

Thank you for participating in this research. This form includes the purpose of the study, a description of the involvement required and your rights as a respondent. Information from this interview will be utilized as empirical data for a graduation thesis, under the master's programme of Media and Communication studies, Lund University.

The purpose of this study is: to investigate how the Korean female audiences or fans engage with the reality show Street Woman Fighter.

Your Participation: Your participation in this study will consist of an interview lasting approximately 40 minutes to 1 hour. You will be asked a series of questions about your experiences with the show. You are not required to answer all the questions. You have the right to pass on any question that makes you feel uncomfortable. At any time, you may notify the researcher that you would like to stop the interview and your participation in the study. There is no penalty for discontinuing participation.

Confidentiality: The interview will be audio recorded. All of your information and interview responses will be kept confidential. Your name and identifying information will not be recorded in any part of the written paper of the research. The researcher shall not share your individual responses with anyone.

For any questions, please feel free to contact me at: de7063le-s@student.lu.se

By signing this consent form, I certify that I [Your Name] understand and agree to the terms of this agreement.

Date: [Today's date]

Appendix 3: Interview participants' profile

Random Name	Age (birthyear)	Identification	Gender	Address (region)	Occupation	Interview date	Interview length
Jennie	26 (1995)	Fan	Female	Incheon	Freelance producer	2022.03.21	56 min.
Chaeyoung	27 (1994)	Fan	Female	Seoul	Student	2022.03.22	51 min.
Bom	25 (1996)	Fan	Female	Seoul	Unemployed	2022.03.23	49 min.
Jisoo	32 (1989)	Follower	Female	Seoul	Student	2022.03.24	43 min.
Heedo	26 (1995)	Fan	Female	Gyeunggi-do	Unemployed	2022.03.25	48 min.
Minzi	32 (1989)	Audience	Female	Gyeunggi-do	Musician	2022.03.25	50 min.
Chaelin	28 (1993)	Follower	Female	Seoul	Salesperson	2022.03.27	53 min.
Dara	32 (1989)	Fan	Female	Seoul	Teacher	2022.03.27	49 min.
Stella	28 (1993)	Fan	Female	Gyeunggi-do	Student	2022.03.28	45 min.
Jieun	21 (2000)	Follower	Female	Gyeunggi-do	Student	2022.03.28	40 min.

Appendix 4: Interview guide

Introduction: Icebreaking for establishing rapport

- Greetings.

- Briefing on the topic, target audience

- Brief on the informed consent and participants' rights

- Acquire consent: Word form

- Tell me about yourself.

- What do you do for a living?

- Do you live alone/with friends/with family?

- What do you usually do in your free time? (ex. meet friends, go travel…)

- How often do you watch TV?

- What kind of genre do you usually watch on TV? (ex. drama, documentary, news, reality show…)

- Describe your experience of watching reality competition shows in South Korea.

Theme 1: Viewing context

- Tell me how you discovered Street Woman Fighter (ex. friends' recommendation, social media, trailer…)

- How did you watch it?

  a. Live on TV or catch up?

  b. Watching together with someone, or alone?

  c. What did you prefer to do after watching it? (ex. leave reviews on social media, share opinions with friends, rewatch the performances…)

Theme 2: Production / Producers

- What do you think about the broadcaster Mnet?

- What do you think about the competition system, including the auditions, live shows?

- Can you comment on dance, music, the stage etc. for the show?

- What do you think about their editing style for the show? (ex. the way the contestants were edited as characters, or the devil's edit technique?)

- What do you think about the judges in the show? Do you trust their judgement, their comments?

Theme 3: Contestants

- What do you think about the contestants?
- Can you comment on the different dance crews, the style of dance, the way the crew work together? Do you have favourites?
- What do you think of the ways audiences can interact with the contestants? (ex. leave comments, participate in online voting…)
- Have you voted, or left comments? Have you ever watched other shows *SWF* contestants were on?

Theme 4: A spectrum of engagement
- What did you like or dislike about the show?
- Can you describe the most memorable scene in the show?
- Which dancers or dance crews do you relate to? And judges?
- What things might you react more negatively towards?
- What do you think about this season and female street dancers? What about the next season on male dancers? How will the dancers be edited? (ex. the devil's edit for female and male dancers)

Theme 5: Social media
- Tell me about how you used social media while viewing the show. (ex. follow contestants' accounts, screenshot the show and post it…)
- Which platform did you use the most?
- What kind of content did you usually pay attention to, relevant to the show? (ex. official clips, recreated content by fans…)
- Can you show me particular fan content or comments, in particular on devil's edit and fan backlash?
- What about fan content, the show and your motivation to dance?
- Did the show make you watch more dance clips?

Finish: anything else?
- How would you relate yourself to *SWF*? How would you describe yourself? (ex. as a fan, follower, or audience…)
- Thank you. You can contact me if you have any further questions.

Appendix 5: Interview transcript sample

Participant: Jennie (anonymized by random name)

Date: 2021.03.21

Length: 56 minutes long

R: Researcher, P: Participant

R: Can you introduce yourself?

P: Hi, I'm Jennie*(random name), 28 years old (Korean age), living in Incheon, Korea.

R: What do you do for a living?

P: I'm a documentary producer, a freelancer.

R: That's cool. How long have you worked as a producer?

P: It's been two years now.

R: Do you live alone or with your family?

P: I'm living with my family.

R: What do you do in your free time?

P: I usually watch Netflix.

R: What was the one you've watched these days?

P: These days? It was *Juvenile Justice,* and it was good.

R: Oh, I liked that too. I really enjoyed it. Since you are a producer, I guess that you watch television a lot. How often do you watch television?

P: I watch television around for an hour or two hours a day.

R: Which genre do you usually watch on TV?

P: I usually watch a drama on weekdays and reality shows on weekends.

R: What was the reality competition show you've watched most recently?

P: I've watched the show, *My Teenage Girls*.

R: A-ha (nodding), how was it?

P: I watched it because of Aiki. She was on the show, that's why. I didn't watch it because it was an idol competition show. I watch the shows that the dancers on *SWF* are in. I started watching it because Aiki is in the show.

R: I remember that her role in the show was kind of like a teacher. Was she good as a teacher?

P: No, actually, I felt bad.

R: Why?

P: She is nice as the leader of her crew, but in this show, she had to manage the teenagers desperately chasing their dreams. She is not a person who strongly argues with others to achieve something, so it seemed like she felt bad, maybe because she thought she didn't do her best for the students. I felt bad too.

R: Oh, I get it now.

P: (Smile)

R: (Smile) then I will ask you some questions about *SWF*. How did you discover *SWF*?

P: I didn't watch live from the first episode. It was around when the second episode was out. I saw so many posts and content on the show on social media and in online communities. I wondered why it is so viral. Everyone around me used to talk about the show, and they highly recommended me to watch it. They were like, "Just try to watch the first episode". That is how I started watching the show, and from the third episode, I watched it live.

R: You watched it by yourself from then.

P: Yes, I did. I even set the alarm for that.

R: Did you watch it together with someone, or alone?

P: My family members were not that interested in the show. I was crazy about the show, but I couldn't watch it on TV with my family, but I used the OTT platform, TVing.

R: What did you prefer to do after watching it? For example, talking about the show with your friends or re-watching the clips.

P: Oh, yes. You know, we could watch the dance performance clips beforehand.

R: Yes, true.

P: It was for the voting system. I read the comments on each clip and figured out what others think about the performances. I was like, "Oh, I missed the details of the dance, like a small hand gesture." and rewatched the clips again… and while I watched the live on my laptop, I texted with my friends on the messenger with my phone. I texted like, "Did you see that!? team Holybang nailed it today." and I also left some comments on social media like Twitter, instead of talking in-person, like "Aiki blew the stage today."

R: It's very similar to my experience. I also talked with my friends online while watching it.

P: (smile)

R: (smile) so… the broadcaster is Mnet. They produced the show. What do you think about the broadcaster Mnet?

P: First of all, devil's edit, always driving conflicts, non-sense editing styles… So, they were criticized again since they showed their bad editing style from the start, the trailer on *SWF*. It was not a scene where the dancers blamed or criticised each other, but the show portrayed them in that way… I think people always criticized a lot on Mnet from the beginning till the end of the show.

R: (nodding) These days, there are many shows based on competition format. What do you think about the competition system?

P: Hmm… First of all, I wanted to see more different dance genres since its title is Street Woman Fighter. It was a little bit disappointing that there were many challenges in K-pop, like new song choreography and four legends of K-pop. It has popularity, but… for example, the crew Coca&Butter, they have their unique dance styles, which seem quite deep and far from popularity, so they always have a penalty in those challenges. But as time went by, I could sense that it was getting better and… I think the audience did not focus on the popularity of the dance genre. If they did, the crew YGX would win. I saw people saying online like, "we need to vote for Coca&Butter next time." The audience tried to cover up the result of the unfair challenges.

R: Oh, the audiences?

P: Yes, this is how I think about the competition system.

R: So, do you think that the audience had more power than before?

P: Yes, I think so.

R: Then, do you think that the producers reflect the audience's opinions and reactions to the show, or.. was it more the audience who made up the backlashes?

P: I think they care about the audience and reflect some points on the show. I felt some difference in their editing styles at the beginning and the end. In the beginning, like in the first and second episode, they emphasized the scenes having a staring contest, but in the end, they showed more different angles on dancers, like the clumsy dancers of the crew Coca&Butter. The producers noticed that people liked those gaps and minimized the devil's edit. They were supposed to show more conflict with devil's edit if they kept their typical styles.

R: (nodding) That's true.

P: That's why I think they cared about the audience and changed their editing styles.

R: Can you comment on the dance, music, the stage etc., for the show?

P: Well, I was quite satisfied with their music choice. I heard that the battle DJ studied a lot about the contestants. For example, the battle between Lip. J and …

R: What do you think about the stage setting? For example, first, they used the glass floor and then they changed it to a stage like a wrestling zone. I first knew how the stage setting is important to dancers from the show.

P: Yes, it was not only about the stage setting, but I think how the producers planned the show was good, but they had a lack of understanding of the real street dance world. For example, Daniel knows about street dance, so he used to say some filler words during the dance battle. But the producers didn't catch what he said, so they wrote something totally different for the subtitles. The stage as well. The floor should have been safer so that the dancers would not be injured. At those points, it was disappointing.

R: Daniel, which scene was that?

P: Hmm, can you wait for a second?

R: Yes, take your time.

P: I think it was modified later… There's a scene where Daniel says 'back-off', 'back-off', and it is a very common filler word in street dance; however, the subtitle was 'back-up', 'back-up'. The producers noticed it later, so they changed it.

R: Hmm…

P: and he said 'Rock' as a filler word for a dance battle, but it was written 'Lock'. The producers were criticized a lot because they even didn't know about the simple words.

R: I didn't know this.

P: I heard that they changed it later.

R: I want to hear more about the devil's edit you mentioned before. Were there any scenes that made you think of typical devil's edits?

P: It is a very typical devil's edit by Mnet. When one contestant appears, others give a bad look to him or her and talk behind. They used those tactics again when the contestants first met in the first and the second episode. They used it a lot, too often, so I was like, they're doing it again. But after I heard the behind stories, I knew they were quite close, but on the show, they were described as the scary ones.

R: (nodding) it is a very typical devil's edit. Was there anything new to you?

P: New devil's edit?

R: Yes, like, "Wait, did they really edit like this?"

P: New… Oh, it was funny when I heard the behind stories. When they did the team mission.. between Coca&Butter and Hook, Rihey closed her mouth with her hand, very scary.

R: Yes. (smile)

P: I couldn't believe it that they portrayed her like that. She was just eating her Kimbab. It was not good… and I remember there were some scenes; maybe the producers failed to adapt the devil's edit. When they had to pick one of the parts for their performance, I think the producers wanted to describe it as conflict, but Gabie, was way too funny, so it ended up like a comedy. I liked it.

R: I also expected that there would be some scenes with devil's edits, but there were some fans who found out the scenes like a person with four legs and shared them on social media. I don't remember which member was it, though.

P: Oh, yes. I think I've seen it in one of the trailers.

R: There were some discussions on Prowdmon.

P: Yes, there were some discussions on the devil's edit on Prowdmon, but I think it can be overthinking because.. delays showing their performance to the next week.. it was not only about Prowdmon.

R: Yes, there were other teams as well.

P: But there were so many who liked the crew, and they complained about not watching their performance for that week. They started to be suspicious if the producers hated the crew. Since Monica is direct and she less cares about the producers and the show, so maybe that's why they thought like that.

R: and… there were three fight judges on *SWF*.

P: Yes.

R: What do you think about the judges?

P: Well, I was disappointed a bit. I thought like, it would be better if Taeyong took the host role and Daniel took the judicial role. It could have brought a more persuasive judge to the street dance. Taeyoung just kept mentioning it like 'it was good, 'it was not good, so it was

too vague. The audience doesn't know much about street dance, and mostly we loved all the performances they made, so we wanted to hear some professional evaluation of the dance. BoA and Hwang had specific criteria at least, but Taeyoung didn't.

R: If someone replaces Taeyong, would that be Daniel?

P: Or… I know they are close, but maybe Jay Park would be nice.

R: Yes, there are other celebrities with relevant experience.

P: That's why I mean. Jay Park or Juwan On. I heard that they used to be good dancers in street dance scenes.

R: Okay, now I want to ask you about the contestants. What do you think about the contestants?

P: I thought like… I don't know if the producers intended it or not, but each dancer was very special and unique. There were so many dance reality shows, and reality competition shows before, like *dancing 9*, but the reason why people are crazier about the show this time is the dancers and their characters. While watching the dancers full of passion for dance, people got inspired… I think that's one of the reasons why the show was viral.

R: (nodding) Can you comment on the different dance crews?

P: I didn't know it before, but I became to know that the contestants on *SWF* had participated in the performances that I liked. It's really fun to know about the dancers, one by one. Monica and Noze did a lot. It's so cool that I can know about these awesome people that I didn't know before and… For example, Honey. J used to be a teacher of Noze.

R: Yes.

P: So I could see their close relationship and Monica and Honey. J, they are mature and more experienced, and Hyojin Choi and Leejung, they are quite young, like a baby, but they gave me the impression that they respect each other without hierarchy but dance.

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R: So your favourite crew is…

P: I would say, Hook.

R: That's why you watch all the shows that Aiki is on.

P: Yes, that's true.

R: Is it because of Aiki or because you like the crew? (smile)

P: (smile) Hook, because I like the crew, Hook.

R: Oh…

P: In the beginning, I was interested in the crew Hook because I've seen Aiki. She was the only one I've seen before on TV, but… Yoonkyung, when she was pointed out as the worst dancer and had to do the dance battle, it was fun.

R: Yes, true.

P: It was like a… the narratives of coming up age. It was really cool; they acted like, "You didn't know about me, but I'm this kind of a cool and nice person." and they proved it. That's why I like them.

R: Agree.

P: Tight-knit.

R: And… you mentioned before that you heard some behind stories.

P: Yes.

R: What do you think of the way the audiences could interact with the contestants?

P: Um... Many contestants like Honey. J, Monica, and Lip. J, communicated with their fans by using live broadcasts on Instagram. Honey. J said, "Rihey and I are good friends, actually," and Monica said, "When I watched myself on the show, I was scared as well."

R: (smile)

P: (smile) Monica said to Lip. J that 'your move feels too heavy!' on the show and Lip. J said, "I'm not that heavy!" on her live. I liked this cute talk… and I also thought about that. The reason why the producers failed to adapt devil's edit at some points was that… compared to past and previous shows, these days, there are so many communication channels. Contestants can easily say "it's not true!" against the edit, so it may weaken the level of devil's edit this time.

R: Yes, then… have you ever watched their live?

P: I haven't watched the live broadcast as live. They usually had a live broadcast at late night since they are dancers.

R: Yes.

P: I was usually sleeping or working, so I couldn't watch it live, but I checked later; like on Twitter, people summarized the highlights. I read or watched it.

R: Have you voted for the show?

P: Yes.

R: Did you vote for Hook?

P: It depends. I made my decision after watching all the performances.

R: Oh.

P: Except for the last episode, I could vote by likes and views on the performance videos on YouTube. I watched all the performances by all crews but only liked the videos that I felt they did very well.

R: Have you ever not voted for Hook because you didn't like their performance?

P: I really rooted for Hook, but when they did the last performance in the final, I didn't vote for them. I just loved the performance by Holybang.

R: Oh, but Holybang was awesome on their last stage.

P: I was like, they are the only crew who should win, so I voted for Holybang.

R: Was it *Venom*?

P: Yes, it was.

R: Now, you've told me a lot about *SWF*… What did you like or dislike about the show?

P: Hmm… the thing I like was that it described the relationship among the dancers, narratives, and attractive characters pretty well. The dancers are very professional when they do the performance, but backstage, they are sometimes, being clumsy, and they get along very well. The show showed these moments through the pool party scenes and crew meetings. So.. it made me fangirl over them. But I was unsatisfied that I couldn't focus on the dance itself well, though there were many performances. You know, the spin-off was *SGF*.

R: Yes.

P: I realized that.. the title of the programme, it doesn't have 'dance'.

R: That's true.

P: It was *Street Woman Fighter*, and the spin-off was *Street Dance Girls Fighter*. The performances were awesome and cool, but I was thinking, "there should be something better

in camera angles, light setting, and stuff." When I watched the rehearsal videos with the full shot, there were many points that the producers could make better.. It felt like they didn't pay attention enough to show the dance performances to audiences in a better way.

R: Hmm.. then do you think they were trained from this experience, and it affected the production of *SGF*?

P: I didn't feel like that, actually.

R: Oh, you didn't? (smile)

P: (smile) They definitely learn something from it, and they might change the dance floor setting because of that… but I'm not sure.

R: because people are going to watch it, anyway?

P: Yes, I guess so.

R: What was the most memorable scene on the show?

P: The most memorable scene? I would say… the mega crew performance by Holybang.

R: Mega crew by Holybang. Is it about the dance performance itself?

P: I liked the dance performance itself, and I like Honey. J preparing the performance. She is such a cool person, and already has a reputation in the dance scene, but the moment when she got the feedback from other members, reflected on herself, and tried to make a change, I liked it.. and each member cooperated for the performance direction. I liked their achievement, at the same time, the process.

R: Yes, I also thought she was a good leader indeed.

P: (nodding)

R: So, the next season will be *Street Man Fighter*, with male dancers. What do you think about the next season?

P: Personally, I hope it's successful. I heard many people saying that the next season should not be successful because Mnet always uses females first for new challenges, and then if it's successful, they go with the male version. That's why they are not happy about the next season.

R: Okay.

P: But season 3 will be produced only if the next season is successful. I hope it is… but at the same time, I'm quite sceptical about it… if they can have nice characters as *SWF* did. In *SWF*, the contestants showed respect to each other even though it was a competition. They accepted the result without complaint. They were truly nice women, but I wonder if male dancers can show that as well (smile)

R: How will the male dancers be edited compared with the female dancers?

P: Hmm… The producers now have the experience that they failed to edit some scenes, like the dancers having a staring contest but ended up showing them cementing ties. So, I guess they will put some conflict narratives in the beginning so that they can show some beautiful scenes that they make up with each other at the end.

R: (smile)

P: Or, there can be some dancers with complex relationships like they had fought with each other because of their common ex-girlfriends and stuff. There can be so many cases like this.

R: There can be more. Since the dance scene is so small, there can be very obvious but complex conflicts between the dancers… and you mentioned that you watched the show while texting with your friends. Can you elaborate more about how you used social media while viewing the show?

P: (smile) Ah, I left some comments on YouTube clips. When I saw comments like "that was a really bad performance" then, I wrote back like "How dare you to say that" (smile)

R: (smile)

P: I was like, "this is art!" and sometimes others joined. Yes, that's how I used social media.

R: (smile) On YouTube, right?

P: Yes, it is.

R: So, did you use YouTube the most as a social media channel for the show, or…?

P: It was Twitter and YouTube. On Youtube, there were some very professional comments analyzing the dance and choreography. It helped me to understand the performance, and I also shared my feelings and reflection with others on YouTube. I used Twitter when I wanted to geek out on the dancers… like talking about 'Monica mentioned like this on her live broadcast' and 'I loved Honey. J's outfit today.'

R: What kind of content did you usually pay attention to, relevant to the show? For example, recreated content by fans…?

P: Oh, yes, I watched that a lot.

R: Can you describe to me one example?

P: Um… when you watch a performance, it is pretty difficult to see each dancer since it is full-shot. So people started to create some clips that focus on only one dancer… I tried to watch those content as well.

R: Oh, you were very into it.

P: You know, YouTube algorithm. (smile)

R: Yes, algorithm. (smile)

P: and the channel *Jossi*, playing Hey mama with a weird instrument and sound.

R: Ah, I know (smile)

P: It's always on my feed.

R: Then can you describe to me particular content on the devil's edit?

P: The devil's edit?

R: Yes, fan content on devil's edit.

P: Yes, I watched some clips analyzing the scenes; for example, as we mentioned, there was a person with four legs, and when the dancers first met, they were described like they gave each other a dirty look, but it was not true. (smile)

R: (smile)

P: I watched the clips with the screenshot and zoomed in on each scene.

R: Then, did the show motivate you to dance or learn dance?

P: Yes, I tell my parents every day. (smile)

R: (smile) Have you wanted to learn or have you tried already?

P: I've wanted to learn. I tell my parents that I want to learn dance, but… I see people learn the choreography of Hey mama very fast, but it was not for me. So I did… the game, Just dance, instead.

R: A-ha!

P: The dancing game. I bought it and played it with my friends.

R: How was your score?

P: I'm quite good at it. (smile)

R: (smile) You're confident! So now *SWF* is over, and its spin-off is over as well. Did the show make you watch more dance clips?

P: To be honest, I watched *SWF*, not because I'm interested in dance. I watched it because the dancers are so cool and I like their characters. The dancers, I can see them on other shows these days, and I try to watch them. Even if it's not about dance, like a typical talk show, just sitting down and talking, I watch it. For example, when I heard that Gabie is going to be on the show *Radio Star*, I watched it, and the most recent one was… *SNL*. The one with Monica, Gabie, and Aiki. I watched it.

R: (smile) I haven't finished it, but it was so funny.

P: (smile)

R: As the last question, how would you relate yourself to *SWF*? How would you describe yourself? As a fan, just a follower, or one of the audiences.

P: I would say… a crazy fan. A big fan.

R: A big fan, wow.

P: Do you remember the waiting rooms for the dancers on *SWF*? Designed with the symbolic colour of each crew. There was a pop-up exhibition displaying the rooms at Seoul station. I live in Incheon, but I had no choice but to visit Seoul only for that.

R: Wow, I agree. You are a big fan.

P: I'm so into it.. but I was very sad that I couldn't go to their concerts because I was so busy with work.

R: (smile) it is almost the end of the interview. Do you have anything else you want to add?

P: Well, I felt… it was super interesting that the males were not that crazy about the show. Many of them also watched it, but I don't think they got crazy about it. I don't know the reason, but… so I want to see if they can be crazy about the next season, *Street Man Fighter*.

Appendix 6: Interview note sample

Interview #3.
2022. 03. 23

Mnet 오디션 프로그램에 대한 신뢰감이 없음.
자극적이라는 인상만 남아 있음.
   ↳ 경쟁 구도에서 기인함.

Mnet. 편집 방식이 진부하다고 생각.
       이제는 "또? 굳이?" 라고 생각하게 됨
외모적 부분에 대한 평가를 강조해서 보여주는 경향.
경쟁을 '질투'라는 감정으로 연결시킴.

파이트 저지는 옥의 티일. 시청자가 납득하기 어려운 결과.
"굳이 저지가 필요했을까?"

댄서들에 대한 동경을 느낌. 예체능 세계 힘들다는 것
인지하고 있음. 크루들을 볼 때. 리더에서 시작해
개개인의 능력치를 보게 되었음. 그래서 선호 크루가
프라우드먼에서 훅리밴으로 변함.

"새로움"을 느낌. 여전히 꿈꾸는 사람들 간의 경쟁이지만
그 꿈의 차원이 다름. 그래서 지루하지 않았음
하지만 경쟁의 공정성이 괜찮았는가는 의문.

모니카. 이런 여성 리더상을 미디어에서 처음 보았음

시즌 2. 스맨파. 새로움이 여전히 유효한가? 하지만 분명
새로 유입되는 시청자 층이 있을 것

무대 하이라이트 '멋짐' ⎫ (대비)
웃긴 비하인드   ⎭

프라우드먼의 무대. 감상 ⊕ 감사하는 시청자들.

Appendix 7: Coding process sample

Script #3

P: 마지막에는 제가 라이브로 못 봐서 투표를 못 했는데, 그 전에 기간 두고 좋아요나 그런 걸로 하는 거 있잖아요. 그런 것들은 다 했던 것 같아요.

R: 그 때는 어떤 식으로 투표했어요?

P: (웃음) 약간 내가 진짜 좋아하는 크루들은 일단 미리 좋아요를 해두고, 그리고 하나하나 보면서 이 팀도 괜찮은데 조회수가 낮다, 하면 좋아요 하거나, 몇 번 더 돌려보거나 그랬던 것 같아요.

R: 음, 그러면 스우파 전반적으로 봤을 때, 가장 좋았던 점과 가장 별로였던 점 하나씩 말해줄 수 있어요?

P: 가장 좋았던 거... 약간 새로운 걸 볼 수 있어서 좋았다. 그 새로움이라는 게, 사실 기존에는, 뭔가 오디션이 노래나 뭔가 가수가 되고 싶은, 연예인을 꿈꾸는 사람들을 중심으로 하거나, 플러스 지망생, 꿈꾸고 있는 사람들의 경쟁을 보여주는 느낌이었으면, 사실 지금 스우파는 기존 본인의 영역에 있어서 입지있는 사람들을 섭외해서 그들간의 경쟁을 보여준다는 게 새로웠던 것 같고. 그리고 그런 사람들이 그들의 영역에서는 굉장히 유명하지만 일반인의 입장에서는 또 새로운 인물인 거잖아요, 기존에 접해보지 못한. 여러 방면으로 새로움이 있어서.. 사실 약간, 질리지가 않았던 것 같아요. 전 약간 사실, 오디션 프로그램이나 그런 걸 보면서, 잘 보는 이유가 빨리 질리거든요.

R: 음.

P: 그 캐릭터나, 그런 사람에 있어서.. 반복되는 걸 잘 못보는 성격인데, 스우파라는 거는 각각이 너무 다 개성있고, 돋보여서, 질리는 느낌 없이 재밌게 봤던 것 같아요. 그리고.. 별로였던 건, 공정성에 대한 문제. 사실 그 공정성이라는 게, 공정하다라는 건 시청자 입장에서 납득을 할 수 있어야 하는 건데. 투표의 방식, 그리고 저지의 전문성, 그리고 편집 같은 거에서 전반적으로 과연 이 프로그램이 그 경쟁을 공정하게 보여주었는가는 좀 의문이 많이 있었던 것 같아요. 그래서 오히려 시청자들이 그걸 바탕으로 본인들의 컨텐츠를 더 많이 생산해 낸다는 느낌이 더 있었던 것 같아요. 사실 뭔가, Mnet이 있는 그대로를 보여줬다고 하면, 사람들이 그렇게까지 본인들의 컨텐츠를 만들지 않았을 거라고 생각하거든요. 근데.. 오히려 시청자들이 본인들의 생각이나 그런 걸 공유할 수 있는 뭔가를 만들어 낸다는 건.. 그런 악의적인 편집이 있었기 때문이지 않을까요.

R: 맞아요. 그러면.. 혹시 스우파에서 가장 기억에 남았던 댄스 크루나 댄서가 있다면?

P: 음, 저는.. 모니카.

R: 모니카. 왜 인상에 깊으셨어요?

P: 그냥.. 뭘할까. 약간 그런 리더를 생각을 해본 적은 있는데, 이 미디어에서 그런 실제 인물이 그렇게 리더하는 걸 보여주는 걸 처음 본 것 같거든요. 본인이 정말 실력을 가지고 있고, 그 실력에 대해서 믿음을 가지고 있고, 그걸 바탕으로 아닌 것은 아니라고 분명하게 말할 수 있고, 그런 거에 대해서 타협하지 않는 듯 한. 그리고 어쨌든 결과가 주어지면 그걸 받아들일 줄 아는, 그런 모든 것들이 생각은 해 왔지만 이때까지 미디어가 그런 리더상을 보여주거나 한 적이 있는가, 여성에 대해서. 그래서 그런 점이 인상 깊었던 것 같아요.

DEBORA LEE · 오후 11:59 4월 4일
마지막 회를 제외하고, 스우파 투표에 참여함.

DEBORA LEE · 오전 12:00 4월 5일
좋아하는 크루에게는 무대를 보기 전에도 투표함.

DEBORA LEE · 오전 12:00 4월 5일
기존 서바이벌 프로그램과 스우파와의 차이점

DEBORA LEE · 오전 12:01 4월 5일
출연진의 개성이 돋보여서 질리지 않았음.

DEBORA LEE · 오전 12:01 4월 5일
공정성에 대한 의문이 있음.

DEBORA LEE · 오전 12:02 4월 5일
엠넷의 악의적인 편집으로 시청자들의 부수적인 콘텐츠를 더 많이 만들게 됨.

DEBORA LEE · 오전 12:03 4월 5일
스우파를 통해 나타난 새로운 여성 리더상.

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Appendix 8: Codebook sample

Transcript #	Page #	Code (English)
2	1	20's female living in the Seoul metropolitan area
2	1	occupation: student
2	1	living alone
2	1	free time: watch Netflix
2	1	use pirate sites to watch TV shows
2	1	genre preference: drama, reality shows
2	1	haven't watched any competition show recently
2	1	have watched the spin-off, *SGF*
2	2	recommendations by friends, with sharing clips
2	2	watched it right after each episode was uploaded
2	2	watched alone.
2	2	recommended others to watch *SWF*
2	2	have talked a lot on *SWF* with friends on a messenger
2	2	negative gesture on Mnet
2	2	have watched other competition shows by Mnet

2	2	negative perception on Mnet
2	2	Mnet is smart
2	2	the relationships between contestants are very important to the fandom of shows
2	2	Mnet makes people rewatch shows by making a bone of contention by the devil's edit
2	3	differences between *SWF* and other competitions show: the characteristics of contestants
2	3	negative on the devil's edit, which has dangerous power that can damage people's lives.
2	3	the audiences have tolerance for the devil's edit
2	3	easy to find the sources online to dispute the misrepresentation by the devil's edit
2	3	no professional knowledge of dance.
2	3	negative perception on the devil's edit. expected that the show will also contain it.
2	3	negative perception of the fight judges. should have been professional street dancers.
2	4	negative on qualification of the fight judges
2	4	Positive perception of the contestants
2	4	the previous competition show *produce 101* doesn't fit with the current social atmosphere
2	4	current social atmosphere: have confidence in their own field, respect others
2	4	change in social atmosphere on females with talents
2	4	the dancers didn't compare with each other.
2	4	liked to see the relationships between the crew members
2	4	Hook showed strong bonding and trust
2	4	YGX was confident of their dance skills
2	5	have watched the re-created clips of the Instagram live broadcast by the contestants
2	5	enjoyed watching the clips of the contestants speaking buzzwords
2	5	have watched other shows *SWF* contestants were in
2	5	got more information on the contestants from other shows
2	5	haven't participated in voting for *SWF*
2	5	keep repeating following and unfollowing the Instagram account of the contestants
2	5	have watched other TV shows and YouTube clips, *SWF* contestants were in

2	6	have watched the YouTube clips on the personal channels of the contestants
2	6	liked to see the image gap between the dancers on *SWF* and other shows
2	6	liked to see the female contestants with their unique femininities
2	6	didn't like the tournament system
2	6	no need for tournament
2	7	remind of the scenes on *SWF* when she listens to the song used on *SWF* in her daily lives
2	7	people argue that Mnet always try a female version of shows first
2	7	already have watched some male dancers on TV, so not interested in *SMF*
2	7	it will be difficult to see the interesting relationship between dancers on *SMF*
2	7	*SMF* dancers will appeal to pity their previous contention
2	7	the devil's edit can describe close friends as being at odds with each other
2	7	the devil's edit can make interesting narratives
2	7	have watched how Mnet build up narratives by using the devil's edit, from previous competition shows by Mnet
2	8	only clicked likes on *SWF* related content
2	8	rarely leave comments since they are recorded
2	8	Used YouTube the most to watch *SWF* related contents
2	8	have watched the content on the devil's edit on YouTube and Instagram
2	8	see much content related to *SWF* on Instagram
2	8	wanted to learn a dance to workout
2	9	see many clips related to *SWF*, dance, and the contestants by algorithms
2	9	crazy of *SWF*
2	9	identify herself as a fan

Appendix 9: Mind-mapping