



Representation of K-Pop Girl groups characters through lightstick

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ABSTRACT

KEYWORDS

Girl Groups
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The aim of this research is to find out the representation of a light stick from several girl groups, namely Blackpink, Twice, and Girls Generation. The research method used in this research is through a qualitative approach using Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic analysis model. The results of this research reveal that Blackpink, Twice, and Girls Generation's lightsticks have similarities in terms of color choice for their lightsticks, namely pink. Meanwhile, the color pink itself can be represented as women, love, sweetness, affection, feminism, soft and smooth. And the conclusion obtained from this research is that a light stick has its own meaning or representation for each group. Apart from that, the choice of lightstick colors for the three girl groups can indicate that the three girl groups want to be known for their feminine side through pink lightsticks.

1. Introduction

Hallyu Wave occurred as a global phenomenon, ranging from music, art, fashion, make up to culinary delights, most of which follow the unique South Korean culture and continue to this day. Initially the term Hallyu emerged from the mass media (Jin & Yoon, 2017). According to the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), in early 1997, a Seoul Music Room radio broadcast program broadcast from Beijing introduced the K-Pop music and dance genre. In 1999, journalists from China for the first time used the term Hallyu Wave to refer to the wave of entertainment industry products from South Korea that spread in Asia (Hyesu Park, 2020). According to Elite Asia, in the late 1990s Hallyu was used to describe the popularity and influence of Korean culture in the world and the beginning of the Hallyu Wave began when the financial crisis in Asia forced South Korea to limit cultural imports from Japan (Oktaviani & Pramadya, 2021). One of South Korea's innovations at that time which finally succeeded in bringing the Hallyu wave to a global scale, was Korean drama (Hong & Jin, 2021).

Korean Pop is a type of popular music originating from South Korea which has very diverse genres ranging from jazz, rock, pop, electronic dance, and even hip-hop (Keller et al., 2020). South Korea marketed their boy groups which later became very popular, such as Super Junior and the girl group SNSD or Girls Generation in their era at that time (Hyesu Park, 2020). The presence of these K-Pop groups gave rise to a fandom phenomenon so that the influence of K-Pop and the Hallyu Wave became increasingly widespread. One of the K-Pop groups that has proven to bring a new phenomenon to the global Hallyu Wave is BTS. K-pop has succeeded in becoming a global phenomenon for a reason, namely with its relatively unique approach to music and entertainment, apart from addictive songs and very well-made dances, K-Pop offers a unique concept and careful detail in every production (Lee & Zhang, 2021).



Lightsticks are merchandise that is often brought when watching Kpop idols' concerts, ranging from various shapes and some are even unique to each group. An idol who first came up with and designed his own lightstick was G-Dragon BigBang (Atmaja, 2021). With a yellow crown lightstick shape which is BigBang's official color, the lightstick was finally mass produced in 2005 by YG Entertainment. Initially, G-Dragon made a special light stick for BigBang fans, namely VIP, to differentiate their fandom from other fandoms, until finally other groups followed suit (Rosida & Saputri, 2021).

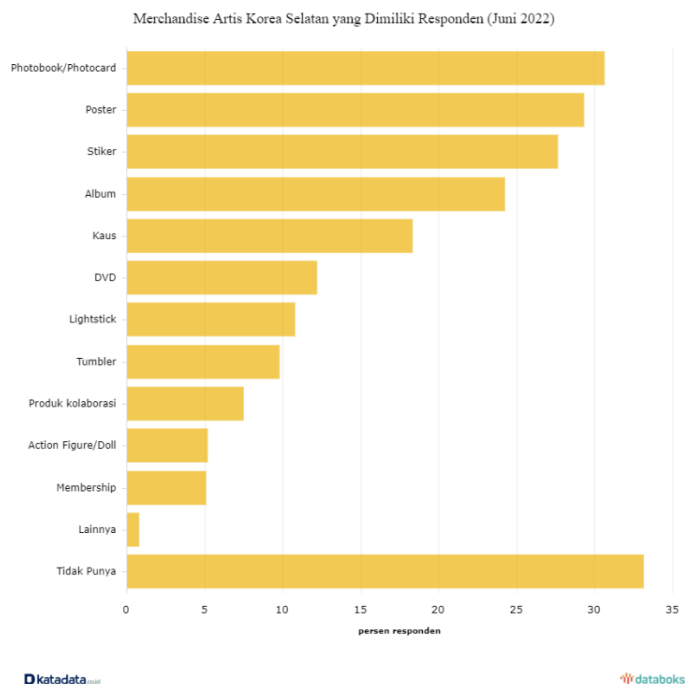


Fig. 1. Merchandise sales data

Source : <https://databoks.katadata.co.id/datapublish/2022/09/07/apa-merchandise-idol-korea-yang-paling-laku-di-indonesia>

From data above, we can see that light sticks are number 7 as merchandise that is in demand by the Kpop fandom. Some lightsticks that have succeeded in attracting attention include Blackpink, Twice and Girls Generation lightsticks. Of the many lightsticks, why did you choose to research these 3 lightsticks, because these three lightsticks have unique shapes and colors. Based on the shape of the light stick that first attracted attention, Blackpink's light stick had a unique shape like a hammer, then there was Twice's light stick which had a light stick shape like a lollipop, then Girls Generation's light stick which was the originator of the pink fandom color (Zürcher et al., 2021).

The aim of this research is to analyze the meaning or representation of K-Pop Girl Groups characters starting from Blackpink, Twice and Girls Generation through the shape and color of their lightsticks. And to find out this, researchers will dissect each part of the light stick for each group one by one. The researcher also used Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory to examine each part of the light stick using signifier and signified tables. Semiotics is a science or analytical method for studying signs. Quoted from Sobur (2009) A sign signifies something other than itself, and meaning is the relationship between an object or idea and a sign. Significant and signifier, namely something that is captured by the mind as a sound image and visual image. Meanwhile, the signifier or signified is the meaning or message contained in our minds about something we perceive, see or hear (Hyangjin Park & Cho, 2021).

2. Method

The research method used in this writing uses a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is research about research that is descriptive in nature and tends to use analysis. Quoted from the journal Creswell, J. W., & Poth, (2018), Creswell defines it as an approach or search to explore and understand a central phenomenon. This research will focus on the representation of light sticks from shape to color using Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic analysis model (Utami, 2022). Semiotics according to Saussure is the study of signs in human social life, including what these signs are and what laws govern the formation of signs. By using Saussure's model of semiotic analysis, the researcher will examine each part of the light stick using signifier and signified tables. Data research or data collection techniques will be carried out by means of documentation and literature study (Yun et al., 2020).

Quoted from Umar et al., (2018) stated that "library study is a search for sources or expert opinions about something related to research objectives". Meanwhile, documentation study is one way in which qualitative researchers can visualize the subject's perspective through written material or other documents produced directly by the people involved and the literature study carried out in this research is by looking at existing literature and news on the internet as well as method of collecting data from problem objects in the form of images or photos as factual data and as evidence to be accounted for (Vidiyawati & Wibowo, 2023). In this research, the objects in taking pictures were lightstick images of Blackpink, Twice, and Girls Generation through image searches on the internet (Wibowo, 2022).


3. Results and Discussion

In this section the researcher will focus on images or shapes that are considered to depict a representation of the meaning of Blackpink, Twice, and Girls Generation lightsticks. The shape of the lightstick will be processed using Saussure's model of semiotic theory to represent the meaning of each part of the lightstick (Ward et al., 2020). To make it easier for researchers to analyze and discuss each part of the lightstick, researchers will present the data in the form of signifier and signified tables. The following is a representation of the characters of K-Pop girl groups Blackpink, Twice, and Girls Generation through lightsticks using Saussure's model of semiotic theory:

3.1 Blackpink lightstick analysis

In this Blackpink lightstick there are several meanings that can be seen from the shape to the color which describes the image of the Blackpink group itself, until finally it was able to form a large fandom, namely Blink and has an official lightstick which is usually called Byongbong or Hammer Bong.

Table 1. Blackpink Lightstick Discussion

Visual	
 <p>Figure 1.Blackpink lightsticks</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Signifier:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A hammer-shaped light stick is black on the handle and pink on the right and left sides in the shape of a heart.</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Signified :</p> <p style="text-align: center;">An item that depicts a Woman who looks sweet and tough at one time</p>

Blackpink's lightstick, which features black and pink, shows two sides of a woman who is sweet and tough at one time. On both right and left ends it is heart-shaped and pink, symbolizing love for its fans. Then in the middle there is a black stick which depicts a tough figure. There is the group name

on the right, left of the heart as well as on the stick and hammer shape which can be described as the identity of a tough woman but has a warm feeling of compassion and love for the people around her. This hammer can be considered a sweet and funny toy hammer, but it can provide a surprising impact and fear. That's the impression shown by the Blackpink members when on stage. Meanwhile, the Lightstick was officially released at the same time as Blackpink's comeback album, Square Up. The colors "Black" and "Pink" correspond to their group name, namely Blackpink (Fatimah, 2022).

From what can be seen, Blackpink's lightstick has various meanings for its fandom, starting from the form of love given to its fans and vice versa. Because basically the color pink is often associated with women and a form of affection. This color is also classified as a bright color which can attract attention and can also symbolize joy and happiness. Apart from that, pink can also reflect a woman who is feminine and elegant. As seen in their video clip entitled *As If It's Your Last*, it illustrates that women must always look beautiful by using makeup wherever they are. This can be seen from the makeup that Blackpink members always wear in all settings, both private and public settings. In line with this, Blackpink itself is the brand ambassador of the cosmetics brand Moonshot. Meanwhile, black can be described as a strong force of courage, as well as showing the sexy and graceful side of women. So, if black and pink are combined, it can become an elegant color combination full of hidden meanings behind it.

There are several scenes in Blackpink's video clip entitled *DDU-DU DDU-DU* which depict Blackpink as a group with members who look sweet on the outside but tough on the inside. One of the scenes that illustrates this is during the *Lalisa* scene at the beginning of the video clip, minutes 00.40-00.44 which shows Lalisa opening her sword and carrying the sword on her shoulder until she sits on the table and hits her light stick wearing a pink outfit. In this scene, you can see that Blackpink looks cute on the outside because they are wearing a pink outfit and looks very sweet and cute but tough on the inside because they are carrying a sword and a light stick in the shape of a hammer. And in the video clip, postmodern feminism dominates, where the characters create a new narrative or discourse, that women are not weak, women can be leaders, women can be successful and ready to fight on the battlefield, in the sense of fighting against discrimination (Rini and Fauziah, 2019).


The video clips *DDU DU-DDU-DU* and *How You Like That* reflect that they contain postmodern feminist messages. Blackpink speaks out about women who must act decisively when their hearts are broken. Women also must not give up in fighting for their love story. Apart from that, women must not be weak and independent in fighting injustice in love stories, and women also have the right to voice their rights in public (Rini & Fauziah, 2019). Another song from Blackpink entitled *How You Like That* also reflects the female figure with the theme of girl power which shows that women are creatures who dare to create change. The three-minute song represents the figure of a woman who is strong, smart, has the right to pursue and have what she wants, brings change to society, and has the right to freedom (Irma, 2021). From the messages conveyed by Blackpink in from the music video, it can be concluded that Blackpink's lightstick really depicts how strong their group is in the eyes of their fans. Like the light stick which is in the shape of a hammer, the effect caused when the light stick is hit is surprising, the same is the case with Blackpink, which can surprise their fans with every appearance they show off.

From the things above, it can be concluded that Blackpink's lightstick represents the image of the girl group Blackpink, a girl group that looks tough but has a sweet side to each of its members. So the light stick can represent the image of their girl group, as well as being a form of their love for their fans, namely Blink. Therefore, it is not surprising that Blackpink's lightstick is popular with fans because it has deep meaning from various angles to the colors on the lightstick. On the other hand, the light stick is very useful during concerts, where Blackpink can clearly see their fans while they are on stage with the light produced by their light stick. That's why their lightsticks have their own meaning and meaning for idols and their fans.

3.2 Twice lightstick analysis

Twice's lightstick has attracted the attention of many people because of its cute shape like a lollipop. Pink and white in color which looks very sweet and beautiful like the image of the girl group Twice itself. Twice's lightstick, known as *Candybong*, has colors and shapes that can represent the image of the girl group Twice.

Table 2. Discussion of Twice lightsticks

Visual	
 <p>Figure 2.Twice Lightstick</p>	<p>Signifier:</p> <p>A lightstick shaped like a lollipop is white on the handle and pink on the top in the shape of a lollipop.</p> <hr/> <p>Signified :</p> <p>An object that depicts a group whose members have cute and cheerful personalities.</p>

Twice's light stick has a shape like a white and pink lollipop which can be represented as someone who has a beautiful, funny and cheerful personality because the lollipop itself can be interpreted as something sweet and can bring joy to happiness (Lee, 2018). It's the same with their group name, which means touching two people's hearts at once through the ears and eyes, so that it can hypnotize the audience who see it with the talent of each member. Meanwhile, the official name of the TWICE fandom is ONCE, which means that if fans love this group even just once, the members will return it with double the love (Wong et al., 2021). That's one of the reasons why Twice's lightstick can depict the love of the girl group Twice to ONCEs.

No It can be denied that the reason Twice decided to make this lightstick shape was to represent their love for their fans, namely ONCE. From the dominant color pink and lollipop shape, it can be described as a feminine and childish female form, where Twice members are quite young, with the youngest age being 16 years and the oldest being 20 years old when they debuted in 2015 (Giumetti & Kowalski, 2022). The white color on the handle can be described as innocence, when the group first debuted it was seen that the members who still looked innocent, pure and elegant could attract their fans with the aura they exuded. Apart from that, the colors pink and white can also be interpreted as a mixture of love and innocence, a form of pure and sincere love for his fans. Their choice of lightstick colors really matches the aura of each member who is beautiful, funny, sweet and feminine at the same time, making their group look elegant.

No there is no doubt that Twice can capture the hearts of their fans, according to the representation of the shape and color of their light sticks. Apart from this, it can be proven by Twice often being the Brand Ambassador for several beauty products, such as being the Brand Ambassador for the Scarlett Whitening product. In 2021, Korean girl group Twice won the most awards as "Best Female Group" at one of the music awards events in Asia, namely the Mnet Asian Music Awards (MAMA). Seeing the enthusiasm of the Asian public, especially in Indonesia, who really like girl bands, Scarlet's owner Felicia Angelista is interested in making Twice the official brand ambassador for Scarlett Whitening on October 16 2021 (Soedarsono et al., 2020). This proves that Twice has a pure and elegant aura on the outside but is cute and sweet on the inside so that it can capture the hearts of anyone who sees it.

Twice is a girl group that is used as a role model for teenage girls in their actions and behavior. Apart from that, the fashion style used by TWICE has become a trendsetter for its main female ONCEs (Safitri et al., 2019). It can be concluded that they can attract the attention of their fans so that they can increase sales of a brand, according to the representation of their light stick. It doesn't stop there, the number of TWICE fans in Indonesia in 2018 has reached 103,084 fans from all over Indonesia. However, the average TWICE fan in Indonesia is a teenager with an age range of 16-20 years (Rani, 2019). From this it can be concluded that Twice has a big influence in terms of beauty and fashion,


which can be represented through their light sticks in the form of pink and white lollipops, according to the characteristics of their group.

From several things above, it can be concluded that Twice's lightstick can represent the image of the girl group Twice which is sweet, cute, beautiful and feminine. Apart from that, it can also represent Twice's love for her fans and vice versa. Starting from the shape to the color, it has a deep meaning for Twice and their fans, namely ONCE. Not only that, the light stick is very useful during concerts, because it can produce beautiful colors so that it adds excitement and enjoyment for Twice and ONCE. The shape and color of Twice's light sticks match and look harmonious between idols and their fans and can describe the girl group Twice who wants to be known with a cute, sweet, beautiful, even feminine image that is synonymous with women.

3.3 Analysis of Girls Generation lightsticks

Color a light stick that matches their fandom color, namely pink, which was also the first fandom to create pink as their fandom color before there were other pink fandom colors.

Table 3. Discussion of Girls Generation lightsticks

Visual	
	<p>Signifier: A lightstick in the shape of a heart, pink on the top and white on the handle.</p>
<p>Figure 3. Girls Generation Lightsticks</p>	<p>Signified : An object that can depict the form of love from a group to its fans, and vice versa.</p>

On Girls Generation's light stick, which has two colors, namely pink and white, at first glance is only a heart shape, but if you look closely the heart shape is formed from their group symbol, namely "GG" which is reversed and combined into a heart shape. The pink color on the outside of the heart shape is made transparent so that you can see the "GG" shape inside. There is their group name written in a circle around the bottom of the heart which can clearly see the identity or ownership of the light stick because the pink color is made in a more shiny color with a luxurious impression. Apart from the shape which clearly depicts the heart or love directed towards their fandom, namely SONE, there is also a choice of color that is determined to represent love for their fandom.

The pink color symbolizes feelings of affection and love, the joy that is generated, and represents the personalities of the Girls Generation members which can make their fandom full of joy and happiness. A woman who is soft and full of positive energy is one of the meanings of their pink light stick. Meanwhile, on the other hand, the white stick or handle which looks harmonious with the pink color gives the impression of how solid the group and its fandom are in building relationships from the start of their debut until now, even though some of the members have gone into separate careers, they still have a harmonious relationship. This is evident from their recent comeback by launching a video clip entitled Forever 1. "This song is suitable for Girls' Generation's current condition. Today is our birthday, and we feel we have to look back at everything we have done in the past," said Sunny in a press conference held before the album release, citing Korea JoongAng.

Like the beauty they show in Gee's music video, overall the inner beauty elements shown by Girls Generation personnel in Gee's video clip, especially in terms of ability, are acknowledged by all informants as having their own charm. In the aspect of appearance, beauty is represented by this music

video with the characteristics of a tall, thin body, and various ideal physical characteristics of Girls Generation personnel, how to dress and choose costumes, accessories and color combinations used by Girls Generation, how the camera takes pictures of Girls Generation from the bottom corner, even from the story of the mannequin itself, it depicts that women are a type of creature that is 'half human'. In Girls Generation's music video entitled Gee, female beauty is represented by reproducing stereotypical feminine characteristics.

No only Girls Generation members represent aspects of beauty and appearance, their SONE fans take part in this. They started following the fashion style of their idol, namely Girls Generation. The main reason SONEs use Girls Generation style is because they think that Girls Generation style is a fashion that is unique and different from fashion in general. However, there are other factors that ultimately strengthen their thoughts on using SNSD style, apart from being a necessity when they join the SONE fandom, the use of Girls Generation style is also influenced by environmental factors where they were before joining the SONE fandom so that imitation behavior occurs. What happens is that what they do only revolves around the fashion they wear. The SONEs have not yet gone into imitation that is too in-depth such as changes in behavior and changes in lifestyle and most of them only imitate Girls Generation fashion in terms of clothing models, materials and motifs only (Jeong et al., 2017).

From explanation above, it can be concluded that Girls Generation's lightstick can represent the image of a beautiful and feminine girl group that looks very elegant. The aura they exude when they are on stage is the same as the color emanating from their light stick, the bright fuchsia pink color looks very feminine and elegant and has a very strong meaning of love for their fans. Not only that, as the first fandom or originator of the pink fandom, Girls Generation succeeded in showing the image of their group through their light sticks. From the shape to the color, everything represents the figure of the girl group and its fans who are full of love. That's what makes the color of their lightstick represent the power of SONE's love that has accompanied them since Girls Generation debuted until now.

The girl group itself has been popular for a long time, the Hallyu Wave brought big changes and impacts to the industrial world in South Korea, especially in the entertainment industry. Girl groups are one of the breakthroughs in the Hallyu Wave phenomenon, where girl groups can create their own attraction. Starting from beauty to fashion, they really pay attention to every detail. For this reason, it is not surprising that the members of this girl group have their own aura and charm. Not only the members, but also their own girl groups definitely have a group image that they build themselves. There are those who have a cute, elegant, girl crush image and so on. It can be said that girl groups are one part of the Hallyu Wave phenomenon which can bring the Korean wave to greater recognition on the international stage.

The Hallyu Wave is onInitially it was predicted that it would only be a phenomenon that would quickly disappear as time went by, but now it has managed to gain recognition from the international industrial world to become a phenomenon that continues to grow rapidly to this day. K-Pop has become global and continues to progress with the image they have created, one of which is by relying on their girl groups. From the discussion above, the three lightsticks, Blackpink, Twice, and Girls Generation, have a feminine side which is shown in the choice of lightstick color. Quoted from Zuccaro et al., (2019) Pink is seen as an energetic color, looks young and creates a soft and free feeling. Pink easily describes the smooth and soft surface of the material. Pink is synonymous with women or feminine characters (Starr et al., 2022). So by choosing and using the color pink which is synonymous with femininity, these three groups want to be known as girl groups that have a feminine side.

3.1. Presenting the Results

From the research above, the researchers produced the fact that the three groups, namely Blackpink, Twice, and Girls Generation, chose the shape of the light stick and its color according to the image of their group. And the image of each girl group is different, starting from Blackpink who brought the girl crush concept, then Twice who brought the cheerful and fresh concept, then Girls Generation who brought the girly and mature concept. Blackpink's lightstick, named Byongbong or Hammer Bong, is in the shape of a pink and black hammer which represents the group's sweet and tough image. Twice's lightstick, named Candybong, is in the form of a pink and white lollipop which represents the group's cute and cheerful image. Then there is the heart-shaped Girls Generation lightstick called Sowonbong in pink and white which represents the group's girly and feminine image.

And from this research, researchers found that the three groups had similarities in their light sticks. From Blackpink, Twice and Girls Generation's lightsticks, the lightsticks are pink. The color pink tends to be associated with women, love and affection. The color pink in the southeast means love, sweetness, affection, femininity, softness and refinement (Ho, 2017). Blackpink, Twice and Girls Generation, all three are girl groups and all three have fans who are full of love and affection for the group, and vice versa, all three groups choose lightstick colors that can describe their love for their fans.

3.2. Create a Discussion

Discussing the results of the data obtained by researchers, Hallyu Wave through lightsticks can build an image of a girl group, each of which has a unique and interesting image. The perfect image, with the beauty standards applied in South Korea, is the image built by girl groups in the Hallyu Wave phenomenon so that they can penetrate the international entertainment industry market. Starting from Blackpink, Twice, and Girls Generation, all three have the image of a strong and beautiful female group and have a sweet impression that can seduce their fans. Through lightsticks, the three lightsticks can represent the image of their respective groups.

4. Conclusion

This research found that light sticks represent the image of a girl group. Starting from the Blackpink lightstick which is in the shape of a pink and black hammer which represents a sweet and tough group, then secondly there is the Twice lightstick which is in the shape of a lollipop which represents a cute and cheerful group, thirdly there is the Girls Generation lightstick which is in the shape of a pink and white heart. represents a girly and feminine group. The researchers' observations of the shape and color of the lightsticks from the three groups showed that each lightstick had its own meaning and representation for each group.

Apart from that, Blackpink, Twice, and Girls Generation's lightsticks have the same color used in selecting their lightsticks, namely pink. Where the color pink represents women, while the three groups are girl groups and the color pink is also used to highlight the image or feminine side of the three groups. Not only that, the choice of pink was intended to depict the group's love for its fans. So it can be concluded that the three groups chose pink as the main color on their light sticks to represent their love for their fans.

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