

Exploring The Dynamic Between Online Social Infrastructure  
and Online Community of Practice in Social Media Fandom

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## Abstract

**Objectives.** Fandom is more than people who share subculture interests; it also supports social interaction, fan practices, and learning. This corresponds to two concepts: social infrastructure fosters social relationships that underpin community building and knowledge production, and Community of Practice (CoP) addresses community formation and learning from regular interaction. This study brings these concepts in interaction to explore what can be learned from their online application domain. This, as research suggests that online settings are also a part of social infrastructure, yet supporting empirical research is lacking. This study investigated social infrastructure and CoP by examining how Thai series fans in Indonesia socialize and form online communities on Twitter and Instagram.

**Methodology.** This qualitative study used semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions to collect the data. Snowballing and convenience sampling yielded 22 participants from various Thai series fandom. The interview questions explored fans experiences using Twitter and Instagram as well as perspectives on these platforms' roles for the fandom community. The data were analyzed using codes derived from the theoretical framework as well as open coding were produced.

**Findings.** The findings showed that fans used Twitter and Instagram as prominent platforms to build social relationships and form a fan community. Twitter and Instagram also promote fans' collaboration and shared practices. Fans learned from each other during these processes. What fans learned is not only about fan related skills such as writing fanfiction, but also knowledge that can be applied in everyday life such as foreign languages. Fans also highlighted Twitter and Instagram features that support communities, but noted some limitations that hinder communication.

**Implications.** Based on the findings, this study argued that the relationship between social infrastructure and CoP is indicative of social infrastructure being a precondition for CoP to occur. Social infrastructure is where two main elements of CoP are formed, that is, communities and shared practices. Social infrastructure is also a place for learning communities. Furthermore, this study describes how fans use social media as an online social infrastructure by showing social media as a primary place to build social relationships and bonds. This study suggests that social media app developers should focus more on community-oriented technology and features to retain and grow its user base.

*Keywords:* fandom, social infrastructure, community of practice, online, social media

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## Introduction

Public spaces are important infrastructures for people to socialize. A public space is also referred to as a social infrastructure. Social infrastructure can be defined as the space where members of a community can gather, where social relationships can be formed, and where knowledge is created (Klinenberg, 2018a). Libraries, cafes, and parks are some common examples of social infrastructure (cf. public sphere a la Habermas). However, due to the advancement of technology we no longer require a traditional offline public space to socialize. The internet has developed to create several services which facilitate meeting new people and socializing online. The internet is said to eliminate the need for people to travel long distances to meet and socialize. People have started using the internet to socialize and carry out activities. This proved especially useful during the Covid-19 period, when most public spaces in offline settings were closed and there was social distancing (Dahiya et al., 2021; Hanibuchi et al., 2021). Since its inception the Internet has also been studied and viewed as a ‘public space’ (Van Dijck et al., 2015), and in this capacity, its usage has surged tremendously during the Covid-19 period, particularly, via social media. People use social media as a ‘place’ to search information, entertainment, activities, and socialize (Asghar et al., 2021; Bento et al., 2020; Yabe et al., 2021). In this view, it would seem logical to assume that social media can be said to be a social infrastructure, since it functions as a platform for people to meet and socialize. However, this statement is still a matter of debate among researchers.

At the same time, the concept of a Community of Practice (CoP) also draws on social interaction and engagement in an online (learning) setting. The CoP is understood as a group of individuals who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better by interacting on a regular basis (Wenger et al, 2002). Teacher-learner communities (Jimenez-Silva & Olson, 2012) and healthcare organizations (Bartunek, 2011) are two examples of CoP. Although initial discussions about CoP focused on (learning) communities in offline settings, conceptual and empirical steps have been made to include online CoP (Couldry, 2004; Wenger et al., 2009). Members of online CoP use internet-based applications, like social media, to connect with other members of their community (Dubé, 2005; Wenger & Wenger-Trayner, 2015), such as foodie influencer communities on Instagram (Miguel et al., 2022) and K-Pop fandom on Twitter (Malik & Haidar, 2020a).

At first glance, the concepts of social infrastructure and CoP appear to be linked. The concept of social infrastructure is a space that fosters the formation of social relationships that underpin community building and knowledge production. The CoP is another concept that denotes a group of people that share a passion and learn something from regular interaction. Both concepts talk about interactions, community, and learning. In addition, a community certainly needs a space to grow, and social infrastructure refers to the space that allows communities to form and function. As studies seem to allude to this, no systematic studies are available that discuss and empirically investigate the seeming interaction between these two concepts, particularly in the online realm.

The concept of social infrastructure coined by Klinenberg (2018a) talked specifically about physical spaces in the offline setting. However, CEO Metaverse, Mark Zuckerberg has called his platform, Facebook, a social infrastructure for community (2017). Klinenberg disagreed with Zuckerberg's statement. And argued that Facebook does not fit the definition of a social infrastructure. Klinenberg asserted that human connections necessitate "recurring social interaction in physical places"; however, Facebook and the internet limit this interaction by keeping people glued to their screens (2019). Some researchers are starting to consider that social infrastructure can also be detected in the online setting. Schmidt and Power (2021) stated the internet can be associated with social infrastructure because based on their study, online activities on the internet have similarities with activities that occur in social infrastructure offline settings and are able to connect people. Alaimo & Kallinikos (2019) argue through a literature review that social media platforms provide technological facilities that enable users to form social bonds. However, there is no robust empirical research available that supports the argument that online settings, especially social media, are part of or can be understood as social infrastructure.

In order to contribute to this, the study at hand focuses on online fandom communities which have been nurtured through and in social media. Fandom is more than people who share subculture interests; it also supports social interaction, fan practices, and learning. This corresponds to the concept of social infrastructure and CoP in that they also centre around interactions, community, and learning. Since the inception of the Internet, fan communities have flocked to the Internet and moved from early-day sites such as LiveJournal to social media (Chin, 2018). While a huge body of research exists on fans and online fan communities, the focus tends to be on interaction practices, such as fanfiction, fan forums, and blogs (Henderson, 2015; Hills, 2015). Moreover, in the context of social media, which is said to be the most common platform for fan communities, a handful of studies can be detected but only on

Facebook (Carter, 2018) and Twitter (Malik & Haidar, 2020). Also, here the focus is not so much on social media as a platform for communities to develop, but rather on interpersonal relations between idols and fans (Carter, 2018) and power hierarchy (Malik & Haidar, 2020). Therefore, this study focuses on how social media, as a platform, plays a role in the formation of CoP in the fandom. Two of the most well-known social media which have been used by fandom communities are Twitter and, more recently, Instagram. Due to their popularity among these communities, Twitter and Instagram will be the main social media examined here.

The fan community that serves as the case study centers around Thai series fandom in Indonesia. Thai series have been known in Indonesia for a long time. Thai series are popular in Indonesia because the stories are considered relevant and close to daily life and social conditions, especially considering that both countries are located in the Southeast Asia (CNN Indonesia, 2020). Thai series were not as well-known as they are now due to the limited language translation and distribution via DVD (Triadanti, 2020). However, today there are many subtitled series that can be legally watched through streaming services (e.g., Netflix, WeTV, and Viu) and online video platforms (e.g., YouTube, IQiyi, and Vimeo), making them more popular in Indonesia. The popularity of Thai series has been especially increasing during the Covid-19 pandemic, which also gave rise to various fandoms in Indonesia. Based on a survey by national media *IDNTimes* (Triadanti, 2020), 60% of Thai series fans in Indonesia join the fan community. The fans of Thai series fandom tend to come from various regions, ages, and occupations. They use social media not only to find information about the series and their favorite actor/actress, but also to interact with other fans. According to the survey, Twitter and Instagram are the social media that are used the most by fans in Indonesia, further increasing the interest of examining these specific social media for this research.

For those reasons, this study aims to explore the connection between online social infrastructure and CoP by investigating how the Thai series fandoms in Indonesia socialize and create communities through Twitter and Instagram. Therefore, the main research question in this study is the following:

“What is the dynamic between the online social infrastructure and the online CoP of Thai series fandom in Indonesia?”

The following two sub-questions could be formulated to address:

1. How do the Thai series fans in Indonesia use Twitter and Instagram as social infrastructure?
2. How do Thai series fans in Indonesia view the role of Twitter and Instagram as social infrastructure and its role in online CoP?

This study adds to the literature on CoP and social infrastructure, particularly in online settings, by focusing on relationships between concepts that have not previously been studied in interaction. Because this study focuses on online settings, it adds to the literature on social infrastructure, which previously discussed mainly offline settings. This research also adds to existing research on fandom and social media, specifically the role of social media in fan practices. Furthermore, fans' perspectives can help social media companies develop their technology as a social infrastructure to keep and increase the number of users as well as compete with other online platforms.

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows: First, a theoretical framework outlines concepts of online CoP, social infrastructure, fandom, and community. Second, the methodology chapter describes how 22 Indonesian Thai series fans were interviewed and how the data gathered from the interviews were analyzed. Following that, the findings are presented following the themes of the codebook and relevant participant statements. The final section discusses the main findings, theoretical and practical implications, limitations, as well as recommendations for future research.

## Theoretical Framework

This chapter draws out the study's theoretical framework by providing an overview of relevant literature. First, attention is given to online fandom and community, particularly in social media. This is followed by engaging with the Community of Practice (CoP) literature and its context in online setting, which discussed about practices and learning process in online fan community on social media. Third, social media as social infrastructure is brought into play as well, which appears to be well suited for the formation of CoP since it brings people to interact and form communities. Finally, an overview about the present study and a conceptual framework are presented at the end of this chapter.

### 2.1. Online fandom and community

Fandom is a subculture of people who engage and feel connected and have a common interest in an aspect or specific title of popular culture (Anderson, 2019). There are various types of fandoms based on their interests, such as celebrities, TV shows, or movies. Fandom has become a place for people who create, share, and discuss fan works based on existing media (Fiesler & Dym, 2020). These fandom activities are part of the participatory culture, which is defined by low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, as well as strong support for creating and sharing one's creations. Participatory culture is also about informal mentoring, members believing their contributions matter, and members feeling connected with others (Jenkins et al., 2006). Fans form a community in which they interact, participate, and collaborate, and all of these social activities eventually form a fan community.

The fan community has moved domains with technology. Before the internet, fans met and distributed their works through fanzines, magazines written by and for fans, or fan conventions, where they met idols, fellow fans, and participated in various activities. While the fan convention still exists, the fandom community is increasingly using technology to interact. The fan's relationship with technology and online platforms is central to the culture of these communities (Fiesler & Dym, 2020). Around the 1990s, Usenet was the first major online fandom space. As our technology evolved, fandom communities have always moved to more suitable platforms (Dym et al., 2018). From the late 1990s to the early 2000s, fandoms used Yahoo! Groups. In 2003, fans began using Live Journal, which prompted a



migration (Bury, 2016). In recent years, LiveJournal has lost popularity and fandom communities have moved to social media (Chin, 2018).

Social media have become a communication space that facilitates establishing online fandoms. There are two major interrelated types of involvement in social media: information seeking and information exchange (Trzcińska & Nożewski, 2016). Fans use social media to find information about their favorite idols or series. Social media also facilitate the exchange of information between fans and idols or fellow fans, which creates social interactions and friendships. Of many existing social media, Twitter and Instagram are popular choices among fandoms (McLaren & Jin, 2020; Rouse & Salter, 2021). Fans use Twitter and Instagram as a 'place' to meet and interact with idols and fellow fans (Highfield et al., 2013; Kunert, 2019; Vardell et al., 2022). Some examples are Lady Gaga, who used Twitter to build a community (Bennett, 2014), and all members of the South Korean boy band BTS, who created Instagram accounts to communicate with fans during their COVID-19 pandemic break (Bowenbank, 2021).

On these social media platforms, fans get mutual support and collaborate with members (Kang et al., 2021; McInroy, 2018). Fandom provides fans with a place to share and archive fan works as well as to support social interaction and discussion (Fiesler & Dym, 2020). Twitter and Instagram are also used for fan practices and activities, such as Twice and Stray Kids fans writing fan fiction (Bangun et al., 2020), K-Pop fans making music videos (Rinata & Dewi, 2019) and SKAM fans translating the Norwegian series (Duggan & Dahl, 2019). Fandom is also a place for learning, such as how to write fanfiction (Campbell et al., 2016) or translation and editing skills (H. K. Lee, 2011). This learning process (or, practice) occurs because of fans regular interactions in fandom through online platforms such as social media. One example of learning activities on social media is learning English in the K-Pop fandom community on Twitter (Malik & Haidar, 2020b; Mandukhairani, 2019).

Fandom means a collective of people who share similar idols, share fan activities, and learn from interactions and which is associated with Community of Practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). A community of Practice (CoP) is formed from people with the same goals (Wenger et al., 2002), such as fans of fandoms who support their idols. This concept focuses on socialization and the learning process in organizations. The learning process occurs in a CoP of activities that occur in the community (Wenger, 1998). The following sub-chapter discusses the learning process in community in more detail through the lens of the CoP in online settings.

## 2.2. Community of Practice (CoP) and the internet

The Community of Practice (CoP) emerge from necessity and can be found outside and inside defined organizational structures. The CoP has three interconnected elements, mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire. Mutual engagement refers to interactions between community members that result in the development of shared meaning on topics or problems (Wenger, 1998). Mutual engagement requires interpersonal interaction and establishing relationship (Wenger, 2000). Second, a joint enterprise is a process in which people are involved and collaborate to achieve a common goal. Finally, a shared repertoire refers to the common resources and jargons used by group members to negotiate meaning and facilitate learning (Li et al., 2009). Shared repertoire can be in form of language, routines, sensibilities, artifacts, tools, or stories (Wenger, 1998).

Later, Wenger et al. (2002) redefined the concept and three main elements of the CoP as groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion for a topic and deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting regularly. The three main characteristics are domain, community, and practice. The first characteristic is the domain, which establishes the common ground and defines the boundaries that allow members to decide what to share and how to present their ideas. A shared domain of interest defines the identity of a CoP. This characteristic resembles the joint enterprise characteristic in the old definition of CoP. The second characteristic is the community, where members of a CoP pursue their interests in their domain by participating in joint activities and discussions, helping each other and sharing information. The community creates relationships that allow them to learn from one another. The community resembles the mutual engagement characteristic in the old definition of CoP. The last characteristic is the practice, in which they share activities that members engage in within the community, such as experiences, stories, language, routines, and ways of addressing recurring problems. The practice characteristic resembles the shared repertoire characteristic in the old definition of CoP. The CoP could optimize knowledge creation and dissemination when the three aspects work well together.

Whereas the CoP concept was initially focused on offline communities, Wenger et al. (2009) expanded the term to include online communities. An online community is one where people may participate online to exchange ideas, make meaning, and even form new identities within the everyday functions of online life. Essentially, an online CoP is similar to an offline CoP, except that its members interact mainly in a virtual space through online communication technologies (Dubé, 2005). A study by Zhang and Watts (2008) proves that

CoP can emerge from the online community. An online CoP that was formed could also become a space for knowledge creation and sharing like an offline CoP. Moreover, an online CoP uses various online communication technologies (e.g., website, blogs, social media) to share knowledge with members of the community. Sethi (2017) stated that it is essential to choose the right technological tool for an online CoP. Technological tools should help to improve community and learning, also allow participation, mutual engagement, shared repertoire and the joint enterprise to happen. For example, her research discovered that Facebook Group features such as comments, discussion forums, and profiles encourage participation and mutual engagement, but do not do the same for a shared repertoire.

Online CoPs are also found within fandom, but there are still very few studies that discuss the idea of a fandom as a CoP in an online setting. Henderson (2015) and Hills (2015) used online platforms such as fanfiction sites, fan forums, and blogs as the setting for their online CoP research. But nowadays fandoms are choosing social media as for their community to interact over other online platforms (Chin, 2018). Research on social media as a platform in which a fandom can form a CoP is rare. Two studies which did discuss fandom in social media as a CoP focused on interpersonal relations between idols and fans (Carter, 2018) and power hierarchy (Malik & Haidar, 2020a). Previous studies did not focus on social media as a platform for the formation of a CoP and what makes it able to support the formation of a CoP. Social media seems to be well suited for the formation of a CoP since it is a platform that brings people together to interact and form communities. In this regard, social media, arguably, also resembles a social infrastructure. Therefore, in the next sub-chapter, we will discuss the concept of social media as a social infrastructure.

### **2.3. Social media as social infrastructure**

Public spaces such as libraries, sports centers, or playgrounds are often used by people from different levels of society to gather and interact. These three types of public spaces are examples of social infrastructure. Social infrastructure, according to Klinenberg (2018a) is the space that allows bonds to develop, where social relationships are formed and knowledge is created. In line with this, Latham and Layton (2019) said that the networks of spaces, facilities, institutions, and groups that create affordances for social connection are referred to as social infrastructure. Social infrastructure preserves contact, mutual support, and collaboration among the community members (Klinenberg, 2018b). Previous studies have discussed the role of physical social infrastructure in social interaction and the community (Baldwin & Stafford,

2018; Broxmeyer, 2019). The presence of social infrastructure reduces social isolation, creates social bonding and social participation, which in turn creates a livable community. It can be concluded that social infrastructure is about space for social participation, collaboration, and connection.

Social infrastructure according to Klinenberg (2018a) is specifically as a physical space and that digital social networks cannot replace them, however, Schmidt and Power (2021) disagree with this statement. They argue that the internet today can be associated with social infrastructure. Online activities are very similar to traditional social infrastructure activities. Online communities can also connect people in ways that traditional social infrastructure cannot. For example, the internet can serve as a social infrastructure for people who are unable to leave their homes. People can also communicate with others outside their own city or country thanks to the internet. From this perspective, it can be concluded that the role of social infrastructure as a space to interact for the community can also be provided by the internet, in online setting.

As part of the internet, social media have also been investigated for its possibilities as a social infrastructure. Alaimo and Kallinikos (2019) talked about social media infrastructure sociality. According to them, social media provides technological facilities that make social relatedness between users emerge. Social media platforms are directly concerned with the engineering and instrumentalization of social interactions. Social media environments are accordingly designed to support and direct users' activity. Things people can do on social media such as following, liking, and posting imitate social habits like daily interaction and communication patterns. As Gunawardena et al. (2009) said, social networking tools like social media will alter how we think, learn, and interact with one another.

Twitter and Instagram are two of the many social media platforms that could be investigated for their potential as online social infrastructure. Twitter and Instagram are popular and widely used around the world. On Twitter and Instagram, people can not only interact with people they already know from the real world (e.g., family members, friends, colleagues), but they can also interact with people they have never met before. Moreover, Twitter and Instagram are also platforms to express opinions (Jahanbin et al., 2021) and collaborations (Richter et al., 2022). What is happening in these two social media is in line with the concept of social infrastructure stated by Klinenberg (2018b), which preserves contact, mutual support, and collaboration among the community members.

Discussions about social infrastructure cannot be separated from the discussed infrastructure itself. According to Latham and Layton (2019), it is necessary to consider the

types and qualities of facilities that enable social life. It is also necessary to pay attention to the design and provision of facilities and how their material properties shape the activity that occurs within and around them (Talen, 2019). An example is a public library, which not only provides books, reading desks, and computer facilities. The public library also provides a variety of services for everyone, such as classes, discussion rooms, club meeting places, and exhibitions (Florida, 2018; van Melik & Merry, 2021). It can be concluded that facilities in a space which is considered a social infrastructure also have a role in forming, supporting, and maintaining social interaction.

Just like spaces in offline settings, Twitter and Instagram as social media platforms have a variety of features that can facilitate interaction among their users. *Hashtag* is a well-known feature of Twitter and Instagram that allow users to interact and connect with others who share same interests and thoughts (Pennington, 2018). In addition to that, Twitter and Instagram also have variety of features that encourage socializing and interacting. Twitter has *Threads*, which connect multiple tweets, and *Spaces*, which allow users to participate in live audio chatrooms. Instagram has features such as *Instagram Stories*, which allows users to share photos and videos that disappear after 24 hours, also *Instagram Reels*, which allows users to record and edit 15-second multi-clip videos with audio and effects. Twitter and Instagram features have the potential to support its role as platforms to interact and socialize.

Therefore, it should be considered that Twitter and Instagram function as social infrastructures for fandom the same way a physical public space would. Physical public spaces serve as places to meet new people and interact (Cattell et al., 2008). Social media has the same role as a physical space: meeting and interacting with people. The use of social media has become part of the daily life of the world's people. In 2021, over 4.26 billion people were using social media, or more than half of the population worldwide (Dixon, 2022). Therefore, in this study, Twitter and Instagram will be investigated to see how fans use them as potential online social infrastructures as platforms that support and facilitate communication and interaction within fan communities.

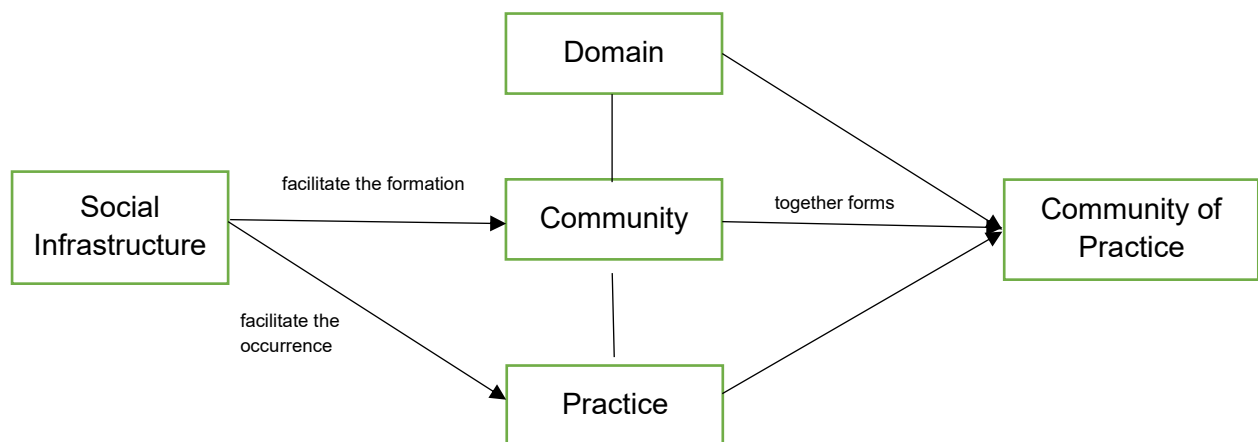
#### **2.4. Overview**

This chapter has reviewed the key areas of literature regarding online fandom and community, the CoP and the internet, as well as the concept of social media as social infrastructure. Fans interact with each other and collaborate to support their favorite sub-culture in social media, eventually forming an online fan community. A fandom that reaches the stage of an online community can potentially be considered an online CoP, where people use online

settings to form a community and have various activities that lead to a learning process through interaction. The online setting in which this takes place, and social media for this study in particular, could be considered a social infrastructure. This social infrastructure can be used as a platform for the formation of social relations and a community for the fandom. The perspective taken in this study is expressed in the conceptual research model in Figure 1. This conceptual research model illustrates how social infrastructure facilitates the formation and running of the community while also facilitating the occurrence of practice in the community. A community and a shared practice which are created and exist within a social infrastructure, combined with the same domain of interest, are expected to create a functional CoP. Therefore, this study explores the dynamic between social infrastructure and CoP in the context of a fan community on Twitter and Instagram. The fan community that becomes the subject of this study is the Thai series fan community in Indonesia.

**Figure 1**

*Conceptual framework*



## Methodology

### 3.1. Research design

This study used qualitative research to explain the dynamic between online social infrastructure and online Community of Practice (CoP) surrounding Thai series fandom in Indonesia. For this purpose, qualitative interviews were conducted to understand people's experiences and opinions better and allow unexpected topics to emerge and be addressed (Busetto et al., 2020; Hak, 2007). The semi-structured interview was a type of qualitative interview used in this study, which allowed the researcher to improvise follow-up questions based on the participants' responses (Kallio et al., 2016). More specifically, open-ended questions were used so that participants could freely explain and express their experiences (Creswell, 2013), and combined with follow-up and probing questions based on the participants' responses (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Herewith, more answers and insights from participants were captured from the interview. This study used a list of interview guidelines questions to ensure that all participants discussed the same topics.

### 3.2. Sampling and participants

The participants were chosen based on four criteria to provide rich insights into social media fandom and corresponding communities. The first criterion was that they are Indonesian citizens. Second, they were engaged in Thai series fandom. Third, that they had a Twitter or Instagram account. The last criterion was that they are actively using social media for Thai series related activities (e.g., posting comment, posting video or photo, talking about interests) (Chen et al., 2015) at least once a week. Therefore, the participants for this study were selected with different non-probability sampling methods. Non-probability sampling is a type of sampling method where the participants are chosen by the researcher, referred to the researcher, or self-select to participate in a study (Stratton, 2021). This study combined two types of non-probability sampling: convenience and snowballing sampling.

First, convenience sampling was used to select participants who were the most accessible to the researcher (Palinkas et al., 2015). The researcher used her network to find participants, contacting friends who met the criteria. To find other participants, an announcement was distributed via Twitter and Instagram, along with a brief explanation of the study's background and the researcher's contact information. Related hashtags such as #thaiseries and the titles of various Thai series were used to find potential participants on Twitter and Instagram. The potential participants were then contacted directly to inquire about

their willingness to participate in the interview. Finally, snowball sampling was employed to find the remaining participants. Existing participants that were already interviewed asked to refer people they knew who had similar experiences (Creswell, 2013).

The interviews were done after saturation, or no new relevant information could be found from participants, and further sampling became redundant (Busetto et al., 2020). With the criteria above, the interview process was stopped after the researcher interviewed 22 participants, eleven of whom are Twitter users and eleven of whom are Instagram users. The sample ranged from 21 to 35 years old and came from a diverse range of occupational backgrounds (i.e., bachelor's students, master's students, full-time employees, and freelancers). They have been fans for an average of three years, with the most recent joining about a year ago and the longest being a Thai series fan for ten years. The sample's characteristics are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*The characteristics of the sample*

Baseline Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
Age		
21	2	9
22	1	5
23	4	18
24	2	9
25	2	9
26	2	9
27	2	9
28	1	5
29	2	9
30	2	9
31	1	5
35	1	5
Gender		
Female	20	91
Male	2	9
Occupational status		
Student (bachelor)	4	18
Student (master)	3	14
Freelance	2	9
Full-time	13	59
Years since becoming fan		
1	1	3
2	14	48
3	2	7



4	1	3
6	2	7
7	1	3
10	1	3

*Note.*  $N=22$ . Participants were on average 26 years old.

### 3.3. Procedure and instrument

Interviews were conducted online since the respondents were in Indonesia while the researcher was in The Netherlands. The interviews were conducted between July 22nd and August 22nd, 2022. For most online interviews, Microsoft Teams and Zoom were used and the interviews were recorded. Four interviews, however, were conducted via WhatsApp and one via Instagram's direct message. Because some participants were uncomfortable speaking directly, they preferred to express themselves through written chats. Prior to the interview, the researcher explained the background and purpose of the study. After that, the researcher explained about the information sheet and consent form to the participants and asked participants for permission to record the interview. The information sheet and consent form can be found in Appendix A. The interview started after consent was obtained from the participants, who verbally agreed to be interviewed and audio recorded. Furthermore, it was specifically stated that the data and interview results were be kept confidential.

All interviews were done in the Indonesian language. The video call interviews lasted between 45 minutes and 75 minutes, with the average interview lasting one hour. Meanwhile, the written interviews via WhatsApp and Instagram's *direct message* took about two days due to delayed responses because of the time difference. Before the interview began, the researcher explained there were no right or wrong answers in this interview so that they could be more comfortable answering questions. They were assured that their information would be handled confidentially and anonymously, and that it would be securely stored. By informing the participants of their anonymity, it is reasonable to assume that they were more detailed and open in their responses. Participants were also given the option to turn off the video camera for their own comfort. The researcher also asked participants for permission to record the interview and informed them when the recordings began.

The interviews began with general questions about the participants' demographics and warm-up questions such as how they learned about Thai series and what kind of social media they use for fan activities. This information was gathered to provide an overview of the sample and ensure that the participants met the pre-defined criteria outlined in Section 3.2. After that, the interview continued with a list of proposed questions about their fandom interaction

experiences on Twitter or Instagram in forming a community. The proposed questions were developed in line with the theoretical framework to answer the research question and sub-questions. The interview questions were divided into five main topics: social relationships (Alaimo & Kallinikos, 2019; Klinenberg, 2018a; Latham & Layton, 2019), facilities/features (Latham & Layton, 2019), the elements of CoP (Wenger, 1998, Wenger et al., 2002), the learning process (Malik & Haidar, 2020a; Wenger, 1998, Wenger et al., 2002), and interactivity and community through social media.

The researcher developed the five main topics of the interview questions into several questions based on concepts and previous studies in the theoretical framework. The topic of social relationships in the fandom via Twitter or Instagram consisted of questions such as *"How do you use Twitter/Instagram to maintain contacts with other fans?"*. The role of Twitter or Instagram facilities in social interaction asked questions such as *"How important is it for your fandom that Twitter/Instagram has a wide variety of features?"*. The elements of CoP in the fandom consisted of questions such as *"Could you tell me about any unique routines within this fandom on Twitter/Instagram?"*. Further, the learning process in fandom asked questions such as *"What insights or learning experiences do you get from participating in activities and interacting with other fans?"*. Lastly, the main topic about interactivity and community through social media consisted of questions such as *"How would you describe the role of Twitter/Instagram in your fan community?"*. The interview guideline in Appendix B shows the complete list of questions. Because this study used semi-structured interviews, the interviews were also conducted with follow-up questions based on participants' feedback.

### **3.4. Pre-test**

The researcher conducted a pre-test with four people prior to the interviews to fine-tune the interview guidelines. The participants of the pre-tests followed the same criteria as the participants for the interviews. The pre-test was used to identify issues with the language, tone, structure, and flow of the interview guideline. With the input of the pre-test participants, the interview guideline could be improved to delve deeper into the interview participants' responses. Participants were individually asked following the interview guideline. The researcher made notes about improvements during the pre-test interview, such as which questions required additional explanation for the participant to comprehend or whether more follow-up questions should be added. Following the interview, participants were asked to provide general feedback about the interview, such as whether the interview flow was

convenient, whether the questions difficult to answer, or whether the questions contained unfamiliar terms that participants struggled to understand.

Overall, the pre-test participants understood all the questions. They also gave long and extensive answers. However, participants also provided feedback, such as changing the order of some questions to make the interview flow better. They also provided feedback on replacing some of the phrasings that were too formal in everyday language to make it easier to understand. After the pre-test, the participants' feedback was incorporated into the interview guidelines. Some questions were adjusted to make them easier to understand by the participants. Some questions were also rearranged to improve the flow of the interview. The final interview guideline can be found in Appendix B. One thing to remember is that no pre-test results were included in the study results.

### **3.5. Data analysis**

After all interviews were conducted, the recordings were replayed and transcribed verbatim. The transcripts did not contain the personal information of the participants in order to ensure their anonymity. Next, the researcher transcribed the interview and coded the transcripts with Atlas.ti, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software. The transcripts were coded based on the content of the interview using a combination of a predefined set of codes derived from the literature and open coding. A predefined set of codes is derived from the question topic elements formed from the literature in the theoretical framework, which is Social Relationships (codes : *establish contact, preserve contact, mutual support, absence of introductory preambles*), Facilities/Features (codes: *type of features, function of features*), Element of CoP (codes: *joint enterprise/domain, mutual engagement/community, shared repertoire/practice, hierarchy within fandom*), Learning process (codes: *what is being learned, role of social media as platform of learning*), and Interactivity and community through social media (codes: *reasons of choosing social media, role of social media in community*). Whenever the content of the transcripts did not match the description of the predefined set of codes from the literature, a new code was created using open coding. The codes generated from open coding used descriptions that “derived from or close to the data” (Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019). The new codes were used multiple times during the analyses, so the code was developed not only for one interview transcript, but also for others. Following the completion of the entire transcription, all codes were reread, and several codes that had similarities or were repeated were merged (e.g., the codes "*limited speakers on Twitter's Space*" and "*Instagram notifications not working*" merged to form "*limitations*").

Overall, different codes were used to answer the different sub-research questions. The relationships between codes were explicitly stated and categorized into five categories using axial coding. The categories are as follows: (1) Twitter and Instagram as the platforms of social relationships, (2) features supporting activities and social life in fandom, (3) online CoP in Twitter and Instagram, (4) learning process in the community on Twitter and Instagram, and (5) interactivity and community through Twitter and Instagram. The categories were integrated into two themes with selective coding (Williams & Moser, 2019) to answer the research question. The first theme was social infrastructure, which consisted of two categories; Twitter and Instagram as the platforms of social relationships also feature supporting activities and social life in fandom. This theme was used to answer the first sub-question because it explains how social media is used as social infrastructure. The second theme was the dynamic of social infrastructure and CoP. This theme consisted of three categories: online CoP in Twitter and Instagram, learning process in the community on Twitter and Instagram, as well as interactivity and community through Twitter and Instagram. The second theme was used to answer the second sub-research question because it explains how social media as a social infrastructure contributes to forming a CoP and plays a role in the community's mutual learning process.

### **3.6. Reliability**

The intercoder reliability was tested to ensure the consistency and reliability of the study's codebook. Intercoder reliability is a numerical measurement of how well different coders agree on how to code the same data (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). Thus, 10% of the transcript was assessed coding by the second independent coder (Lombard et al., 2002), to ensure the objectivity of the codes. The second independent coder received three random transcript files and the codebook from the researcher as a navigator during the analysis. Subsequently, Krippendorff alpha was calculated to ensure adequate intercoder reliability. The result of the Krippendorff alpha coefficient coders' agreement was 0.94. Since Krippendorff (2018) suggested relying on data with reliabilities where the alpha results are the same or higher than 0.8, the codebook was considered reliable. Differences in coding between the researcher and the second independent coder were discussed and addressed, but no changes to the final codebook were made. The final codebook can be found in Appendix C.

## Findings

This chapter presents the interview results conducted with 22 participants inquiring about their experiences using Twitter and Instagram for fandom activities, practices, and interactions in the Thai series fan community. This study's results are divided into two broad themes. The first theme discusses the use of Twitter and Instagram as social infrastructures. The second theme is the role of Twitter and Instagram as social infrastructures and their role in an online Community of Practice (CoP). This chapter presents the findings for these themes.

### 4.1. The use of Twitter and Instagram as social infrastructure

What follows draws out the way the participants discussed about 'infrastructure' which they use to support their social relations and fan practices in their online fan community. This theme illustrates how Thai series fans in Indonesia use Twitter and Instagram as their main infrastructure for forming social relationships and carrying out fan activities, either individually (e.g., writing fanfiction) or collaboratively (e.g., making birthday projects for actors). Furthermore, this theme demonstrated how fans view the roles of Twitter/Instagram features in fan interaction and activities. This theme also discussed how fans use social media features to develop fan activities and interactions.

#### 4.1.1. Twitter and Instagram as platforms for social relationships

For all participants, Twitter and Instagram were platforms where they can meet other people who share their interest in Thai series fans and engage in fan activities. Participants felt they do not need a pre-amble introduction to build interaction and contact because they are both Thai series fans and share interests in the series and actors. The majority of the participants (n=20) started to establish contact and interaction by commenting in the reply column related to posts about series, actors, or fan products such as fan-made videos or fanfiction, even though they did not know who the account owner was. Participants did not need to feel awkward or formal when starting a conversation with a stranger in social media fandom because they believe they belong to the same community. Due to this, it is easier for them to start interactions and relationships within the fandom without a preamble and formal introduction. After the initial commenting interaction, the chat continued into a long discussion and made participants follow each other's accounts, like what Twitter user 5 said:

*We called it 'jbjb', which means we do not know each other before then, but if we see someone tweet that we want to interact with, we will immediately give them Comments, Likes, Retweet, or Quote Retweet. From there, we will continue to have a conversation if we receive a response and reply from the tweet owner or someone else who also replies to that tweet. (Twitter user 5)*

The frequent interactions, discussions, and collaborations with other fans made the participants feel at ease with one another. They not only talked about things related to the Thai series, but they were also comfortable sharing personal stories. Eventually, friendships are formed among members of the fan community. Even though they have exchanged WhatsApp contact numbers, Twitter and Instagram's *Direct Message (DM)* are still the main choices for the majority of participants (n=19) to maintain contact. The ease of sharing fan content and information was the reason why they maintain their contacts and interactions on these platforms.

*We still use Twitter DMs. This is because the intensity of opening Twitter is more frequent than on other applications, so communication is smoother on Twitter than on WhatsApp or on Telegram. So even though we know our WhatsApp numbers, the interactions are more frequent on Twitter DMs. Furthermore, if you share Twitter content to WhatsApp, the content becomes a link and the recipient must reopen Twitter, so I prefer to share via Twitter DM. (Twitter user 1)*

However, two participants who used Twitter underline the limitation of Twitter DMs, which cannot reply to specific message bubbles. Twitter user 6 said she must copy-paste the sender's message and typed her reply in the same bubble message, unlike WhatsApp or Instagram DM, where she could swipe the specific message bubble to reply to. Another reason for Instagram users to maintain contact with their friends on Instagram DMs was because of the richness of the features that make it easier to interact. Not only could they communicate through text, like with Twitter, but also through telephone and video call options.

*It is easier to chat with my friends using direct messaging on Instagram because I can easily share photos, our actor's Instagram Story, or videos. Because if I send the content to WhatsApp, my friends need to open the link that sends them back to open*

*Instagram. Besides that, it is beneficial to talk on Instagram because we can make DM groups and make group calls and video calls together. (Instagram user 1)*

Despite some feature limitations that cause a small amount of hassle in communicating, the bonding and friendship between fans in the Thai series fandom on Twitter and Instagram made them open up and trust each other to provide and receive mutual support. The feeling of closeness to each other, belonging to the same fandom, and their friendly relationship made them not reluctant to ask for or provide support. Most participants (n=17) said that emotional support is the form of support they most often provide and receive through posts on tweets, *Instagram Stories*, or *DM*.

*Yes, when my friends in the DM group, we talk about things other than fandom. For example, if someone tells us they have a problem with their family, we listen, support, and assist them in finding a solution. Most of the time, we also talk and give support in everything, as if we were tired of our jobs or discussing each other's love life. One day, we were acting like a patrol calling one of our friends in the DM group because, in the evening, they said they wanted to go on a date and asked us to check until night there was no response from them. We worried about them, so we kept in contact on their entire date, hahaha. (Twitter user 2)*

This demonstrated how the bonding of friendship between participants gave them the feeling that someone is willing to listen and help them. This sense of friendship compelled them to reciprocate by providing emotional support in return. Other types of mutual support in this fandom included material support (e.g., birthday gifts, Thai series merchandise), academic support (e.g., assisting with internship searches, completing thesis questionnaires), and financial support (e.g., sending money to their friend's e-wallet to purchase food).

Thus, Twitter and Instagram were more than just platforms for fans to engage in fan practices and activities. Furthermore, both social media platforms facilitated the forming of social relationships among Thai series fans. It facilitated meeting people with the same interest as well as building and maintaining relationships with them. They provided mutual support to one another and underpinned their interpersonal relationships. In the end, the relations that are built between fans form a community. In addition, Twitter and Instagram are also the main choices for fans to communicate and maintain friendships. Although there are some limitations on these two social media platforms, the limitations did not make

participants switch to other social media platforms as their primary affordance to maintain their friendship contacts. Fandom members felt comfortable because both Twitter and Instagram provide what the members want, including the ease of conversing with their friends. Because of this, they could continue interacting more with their friends and community without switching to a different app.

#### 4.1.2. Features supporting activities and social life in fandom

As the participants viewed Twitter and Instagram as platforms to form social relations, they also noticed many features in both social media, which facilitate various community aspects. Participants divided the roles of social media features into three categories: facilitation of fan interactions, fan activities, and information seeking and dissemination. The first role most participants (n=18) mentioned was that Twitter and Instagram features helped them interact with fans and build relationships. According to Instagram user 9, the features on social media not only allowed interaction via text, but also audio and video. *DM, Instagram Stories, Instagram Live, Reply* on Instagram, and *Reply, Quote Retweet, DM, Space* on Twitter were frequently mentioned as features that help to interact. These features were not only help them in personal interactions, but also in community interactions.

*There was one big moment when we needed to talk about some problems in my fandom Auto base and choose the new Auto base admin. So, in Space, we all solved the problem. From how come there are menfess (anonymous tweet that fans send to auto base) that invites war between fans to finally having a change and election of admins, everything is discussed through Space. I believe on that time, hundreds of people listened. (Twitter user 6)*

This showed how social media features could also be used to facilitate greater discussion in order to resolve problems within the fan community, or as a discussion forum. Speaking of feature functions as forums, a third-party feature on Twitter, *Auto base*, served the same purpose. This third-party feature was well-known and widely used in Indonesian communities. Fans used this feature to interact with other fans and seek updated information or promote their fan works. Auto base not only acted as a regular fanbase account, it also played a unique role in fandom activity and interaction. This feature lets fans start discussions or even friendships with many people by sending one message, as stated by Twitter user 1:



*Usually, tweets on Auto base are full of conversations and interactions because when we talk about a series, for example, there will be a lot of discussion about that episode. So there must be many interactions in the Auto base. Auto base is also usually a place to find new friends because a lot of people like to search for new friends who have the same interest on specific series. (Twitter user 1)*

Participants' second most frequently mentioned role of Twitter and Instagram features was as a facilitator in accommodating fans' activities. *Thread* on Twitter, for example, allowed people to create a series of linked tweets that are frequently used by fans to write fanfiction, also known as Alternate Universe (AU). *Tweets* on Twitter and *Feeds* on Instagram were also frequently used to inform others about community projects. As Twitter user 10 pointed out, the presence of social media features that support fans' activity was very important for fans because of the more complete features for fan activities; they did not need to move to another platform. It demonstrated the importance of Twitter and Instagram features in fandom activities because it facilitated fans as social media users and kept them from leaving Twitter and Instagram.

The final role of social media features was to facilitate in seeking and disseminating information. *Hashtags*, *Twitter Search*, and *Instagram Explore* were mentioned most. According to Twitter user 6, Hashtag helped to disseminate information to fans and non-fans by making the hashtag trend. Furthermore, according to Twitter user 1, the *Twitter Search* and *Trending* feature enriched and narrowed searches for information about the Thai series related based on the participants' preferences, using result filters such as top tweets, latest tweets, people, photos, or videos. In addition, Instagram user 2 stated that *Instagram Explore's* algorithm generates content based on a user's interests, making it easier for fans to follow the Thai series. Although some Instagram users complained that *Hashtag* searches could not be filtered more precisely to their needs, finding information on *Explore* was more difficult because they must first click on photo content.

Thus, social media fostered the community in providing a public space for like-minded people to interact and collaborate on their works and activities. Since it is a public space, the facilities in it must also be considered for comfort and support for people. Social media features helped fans stay up to date on information and disseminating it to others, enhancing and improving fandom's social relationships and activities. Twitter and Instagram's various features supported Thai series fans in Indonesia's works, activities, and

social relationships. As a result, the variety of features on Twitter and Instagram had become increasingly important to the fan community because they helped develop and shape fandom activities as well as social interactions.

#### **4.2. The role of Twitter and Instagram as social infrastructure in online CoP**

Participants in the previous subsection saw Twitter and Instagram as infrastructure that allowed them to socialize with people who share their interests and activities. On these social media platforms, daily interactions and activities shaped community and fan practices. This theme will discuss how fans build CoP on Twitter and Instagram. Furthermore, it will discuss how participants perceive the fan community on Twitter and Instagram as a learning community and how these two social media platforms play a role in the community's learning process. Finally, this theme demonstrates how participants perceive the role of Twitter and Instagram in the fan community and the practices within the community.

##### **4.2.1. Online CoP in Twitter and Instagram**

On Twitter and Instagram, participants met people who shared the same interests and had the same goal of supporting their favorite series, as well as actors and actresses. As they met and interacted on those social media platforms, they helped each other stay updated and provide more information about the Thai series. Thai series fans were also not hesitant to share what they know with others. Twitter user 5 mentioned how the *"shift schedule"* in the fandom ensured that information about the series and its cast was *"available 24 hours"* for the entire fandom. According to Twitter user 5, *"When there is a series or actor update at night, fans who are active at night will update it to fans who are active in the morning, and vice versa."* This indicates that the common interests and goals drive them to interact frequently and help each other to remain in the loop or stay updated. Members of the fan community worked together to support their favorite series on Twitter and Instagram, strengthen bonds between members, and develop the fan community on Twitter and Instagram.

Although the interactions and relationships of members of the fan community were generally harmonious, it cannot be denied that there are also conflicts. Some common conflicts in fandom were *"fans protesting the main couple not acting together in another series"* (Instagram user 8) or *"insinuating between fans because they have different idols"* (Twitter user 2). Interestingly, sometimes conflict came from fan accounts with a large

number of followers, also known as large accounts. Large accounts are often considered opinion leaders. The majority of their followers believed that what they say is trustworthy. According to several participants (n= 10), these large accounts sometimes stir up the fandom by criticizing the series or cast or fighting with other fans. Twitter user 4 described how conflict occurs because large accounts affect community members and create chaos in the fan community.

*However, when the account has thousands or tens of thousands of followers and they do not like one of the actors in the series for personal reasons and tweet about it on their account, that can be a problem. People will think, 'wow, this is a big account; we can believe what they say,' even though they have no idea whether what they said is true or not. Large accounts sometimes use their influence to shape public opinion. (Twitter user 4)*

Even so, all participants admitted that they did not worry too much about the conflicts in the fan community. They believed that the fan community will be all right at the end of the day. Twitter user 7 said that fans often forget conflicts after their favorite series actors post something new. The participants felt that it was better for them to focus on supporting their favorite series and actors with hyping and various fan activities.

Participants show their support for their favorite Thai series by participating in shared practices. The participants used these two social media as platforms to plan and carry out joint activities, such as donation and birthday projects for actors, hashtag trending parties, selca days (fans post their photo alongside a photo of their favorite actor or actress), and fanfiction festival. They also have vocabularies that only Thai series fans know, such as “rakyat raikantopeni” (raikantopeni people) to identify people who like Thai series or use the greeting “phi” to greet older people than them or “nong” for younger people than them. Participants also noted that Twitter and Instagram accommodate their fandom routines.

*One of our routines is hyping the series together. When the episode airs, we both watch it at home and tweet our reactions when we watch it with the special hashtag for that episode. Some fans are tweeting their reactions along with cut scene videos or photos from the episode. We also talk about what is going to happen in the next episode. My Twitter timeline will be full of those. I think the fun is there. It feels like we're all watching together in the same place, which is Twitter right now. (Twitter user 8)*

Based on these findings, Thai fans can find people who like the same series on Twitter and Instagram. Interaction on a daily basis grows social relationships and bonds, which in the end, form a community. They carry out shared practices in order to achieve their goals in this community. Simultaneously, shared practice strengthens the community because members collaborate, interact, and help each other achieve common goals. Twitter and Instagram also serve as the primary facilitator for community members to engage in various fan practices.

#### 4.2.2. Learning process in community on Twitter and Instagram

From the various practices that took place in the Thai series fan community and the intense interactions carried out by community members, all participants felt that they were learning from each other. All participants said they learned Thai and English through their fandom on Twitter and Instagram. They learned Thai and English by interacting with foreign fans regularly. Furthermore, Indonesian fans frequently conversed in a mix of languages. Interestingly, when they joined this community, they had absolutely no intention of learning a new language. Fans learned unconsciously through regular interaction and activities. Simultaneously, they continued to apply this knowledge through fandom interactions, resulting in a mutual learning process. As Instagram user 5 stated:

*I usually also interact with overseas fans in the comment column on Instagram or Twitter. I think this interaction with overseas fans must subconsciously makes our foreign language skills improve little by little. We may not be fully aware, or we really don't have a goal for learning more language, but the positive effects are definitely there. (Instagram user 5)*

Besides language, some participants (n=10) stated that joint fan activities, collaboration, and interactions on Twitter and Instagram provided them with new insights and skills (e.g., knowledge of Thai culture, writing fanfictions, editing videos). Twitter user 2 mentioned that she learned how to write fanfiction because she *"used to read fanfiction and often chatted/discussed with fanfiction authors on Twitter."* It is indicated that interactions within the fandom provide lessons for its members. However, it turned out that this learning process occurs not only for fan community members but also impacts non-fans. Some participants who used Instagram (n=5) also talked about accidentally introducing Thai series to non-fans. As

Instagram user 3 stated, she *"constantly shared about series and actors on my Instagram Story. Over time, many of my friends asked about the series. In the end, they watched the series and became fans too."* Even though participants did not intend to convert their non-fans friends into fans, many of their non-fans Instagram friends were inspired to learn more about the Thai series due to constant exposure to information from participants.

All participants believed that Twitter and Instagram had a role as a learning community. The participants stated that both platforms provide a space to interact and participate in activities with other fans in the Thai series fandom, which led to learning. While the social media platform was seen as a space for mutual learning between members of the fan community, participants also highlighted how the social media platform features help gain new insights. Fans used social media features like Replies and DMs, as well as app-specific features like Instagram's Reels or Twitter's Threads, to create content like translation interviews and fanfiction discussions to share knowledge with other fans.

*I also saw some fans make a Thread about an artist's interview from Thai to English or Indonesian. So, they make a series of tweets about the translation of what the artist said, along with explanations of the meaning. They not only translate the literal meaning but also, if that sentence has a double meaning or different meaning in Thai, they also will explain. On the timeline, I also usually found that there are people who explain the Thai language, so naturally, I know a little bit about the language. (Twitter user 3)*

For those reasons above, the Thai series fan community on Twitter and Instagram can be said to be a learning community. The fan community's learning process differs from formal learning in the classroom. However, community members had learned from each other through everyday interactions and practices in the fandom. The learning they experience on Twitter and Instagram is not only learning about the fandom-related (e.g., writing fanfiction or introducing non-fans to Thai series) but also learning that they can apply to their daily lives, such as learning a foreign language. Features in social media that were essentially present to facilitate social interaction also play a role in helping the learning process among fan members.

#### **4.2.3. Interactivity and community through social media**

When participants were asked about the roles of Twitter and Instagram in Thai series fandom in Indonesia, the general view was that they serve three functions. For fans, these two social media served as the platform to gather and interact, participate in activities, as well as

find and share information. The first role mentioned by the majority of participants (n=21) is a platform to gather and interact. Twitter and Instagram offered opportunities to form a community based on their shared interest in the Thai series, which brought them closer together and fosters social interaction. This is supported by the statement of Instagram user 1:

*Social media is really like a realm for people who have the same interest in series and actors, so we meet on there, communicate with each other, and the community is there too... Actually, Twitter and Instagram are very helpful; what I mean by that is that the two of them are a platform for us to communicate online. I don't know how fangirling was before social media, or how to meet the community, but now everything is easy because of social media (Instagram user 1)*

After providing a platform for interaction, the second most mentioned role was a platform to find and share information. For more than half of the participants (n=16), the information obtained on Twitter and Instagram was reliable. This is because the information came not only from the artist's official account or official channel broadcast but also from other fans who can help to verify the information. In this way, Instagram user 8 stated, *"if the information is true, many people will provide supporting data. If it is not true, many people must check it out. Furthermore, we do not need a long time to check and prove the truth of the information."* It indicated that participants trusted Twitter and Instagram as the primary information sources and were more reliable than traditional information sources such as news sites. The last role of Twitter and Instagram in fandom was providing a platform for fans for various fans activities (n=7), from personal activities (e.g., writing fanfiction, video editing) to discussions and collaboration between fans such as fanfiction festivals and donation series to celebrate the success of their favorite series.

Given the variety of fandom roles, Twitter and Instagram had new meanings for participants. When asked what would happen if their fan community did not have Twitter and Instagram, participants agreed that fangirling/fanboying would feel hollow because there would be no platform for an online community. The participants believed they would be unable to locate other Thai fans in an offline setting. Furthermore, the fan community would shrink because there were no Twitter and Instagram that spread information as quickly as it does now.

*I believe I would have dropped out of the Thai series fandom sooner if Twitter did not exist. Because I believe Twitter is already a great source of information... Twitter keeps*

*us in the fandom longer because we are constantly fed information about the series and artists on Twitter. And, of course, we socialize with other fans on Twitter, so it serves not only as a source of information for us, but also as a platform to meet others who enjoy Thai series." (Twitter user 7)*

The quote represented the prominent role of Twitter and Instagram for the participant. Until now, the only complete online community spaces for participants have been Twitter and Instagram. A few participants (n=3) stated that if there were no two social media platforms, they would switch to Facebook or YouTube, but the community would be smaller because Twitter and Instagram have more community-friendly features. It also implied that if there were more options for community-friendly social media platforms, they might be moved away from Twitter and Instagram.

Thus, it can be said that the role of Twitter and Instagram in fandom members' decision to stay in the Thai series fandom is significant. Twitter and Instagram met all of the needs of the fan community, including social interactions, fans activities and practices, as well as up-to-date and reliable information sources. To date, there were no social media platforms for fans that had as many features as Twitter and Instagram for the fan community.

## Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the dynamic between online social infrastructure and online Community of Practice (CoP) of Thai series fandom in Indonesia. A qualitative study approach helped to know how fans use Twitter and Instagram as social infrastructure, as well as fans' experiences of those two social media as social infrastructure and their role in online CoP. The findings showed that fans used social media to socialize and form fan communities, just like public spaces in the real world. Further, various features on Twitter and Instagram supported forming communities and practices in Thai series fandom, even though some features needed improvement to maximize their use. On Twitter and Instagram, the Thai series fandom communities carried out their daily interactions, shared practices, and collaboration, which led to community learning among fan members.

### 5.1. Main findings and theoretical implications

The first theme of this study's findings shows how fans use Twitter and Instagram as social infrastructure, where they formed social relationships which lead to fan communities. This finding is compatible with Klinenberg's concept of social infrastructure, where he said that social infrastructure preserves contact, mutual support, and collaboration among community members (2018b). The findings indicate that for participants, Twitter and Instagram as main platforms for them to meet people who share their interest in Thai series. They do not even consider they will meet other fans and make friends in an offline setting without first meeting in the online world. Furthermore, the findings show that participants believe that the variety of features on Twitter and Instagram play a role in maintaining interactions and carrying out activities in the fan community. This is in line with Latham and Layton (2019) and Talen (2019) that emphasized the different types and qualities of facilities that facilitate social life, as well as how facilities of the social infrastructure shape the activity within and around them. That said, participants did make it clear that there are some limitations on Twitter and Instagram that are deemed necessary to be addressed, such as Twitter users' inability to reply to a specific message through a DM.

Thus, based on the first theme of this study's findings, this study offers supplementary empirical support for the online setting as a social infrastructure. Initial concept said social infrastructure (Klinenberg, 2018a) only occurs in offline settings. Some researchers argue that social infrastructure can occur in online settings as well (Alaimo & Kallinikos, 2019; Schmidt



& Power, 2021), but there is a lack of research to support that statement. Alaimo and Kallinikos' (2019) theorized that social media can also be said as social infrastructure because it helps create new online interaction and communication patterns and promote new forms of sociality. The first theme of this study's findings provides a clear picture of how Twitter and Instagram provided participants platforms for interaction and social relationships. Therefore, this study enriches the literature on social infrastructure study in online settings, particularly social media.

The second theme shows that these communities have the same goal of supporting the series and its cast to be successful. To achieve this goal, fans demonstrated that they have interaction and collaboration with others on Twitter and Instagram, where in the process they learn from each other. The learning process is explained as an unintentional process that occurs naturally through interaction. What should be emphasized is that the knowledge gained by participants is applicable not only to fandom but also to everyday life, such as foreign languages. From this second theme, it can be said that the Thai fandom series in Indonesia on Twitter and Instagram can be considered a Community of Practice (CoP) (Wenger, 1998), because it has a shared domain of interest, community, and practice. Based on this, this study adds to the existing literature on online fandom communities as CoP in social media settings. Therefore, this study adds to the literature on fandom as an online CoP. Some literature has already discussed the possibility of fandom on the website platform as an online CoP (Carter, 2018; Henderson, 2015; Hills, 2015). Research on the possibilities of CoP within fandom using social media is still sparse. Whereas in recent years, fandom has used social media as a platform to interact more often than website platforms (Fiesler & Dym, 2020). As a result, this study adds empirical support to the literature on online fandom communities on social media as online CoP.

The second theme of this study's findings also highlighted the power hierarchy in the fan community. The power hierarchy was shown by the fact that accounts with a large number of followers (large accounts) have more influence than accounts with a small number of followers (small accounts). The large accounts have the status of opinion leaders and engage with their followers and the community on a frequent basis. This finding is aligned with Malik and Haidar's (2020a) study about the power hierarchy element in a working CoP. Malik and Haidar stated that individuals who have earned recognition on social media are automatically placed on a higher rank than new or small accounts in their online community. However, this study found the power hierarchy's negative impact on online communities. Large accounts often abuse this influence to seek community support for their personal opinions or problems, which can lead to conflicts in the fan community. Large accounts in Thai fan community are usually

someone who has a strategic role (e.g., AU writers). Fans will defend big-follower accounts because they do not want to lose their content.

This study has brought to light a relation between social infrastructure and CoP concept in online settings. The social infrastructure concept talks about the space that allows bonds to develop and the community to collaborate, CoP talks about the community with a domain of interest and shared practices to address problems or achieve their goals. The first theme of this study's findings discussed that Twitter and Instagram were used as online social infrastructure for Thai series fans to create a community, which was related to the findings of the second theme of this study, which discussed CoP on those social media platforms. In this study, Twitter and Instagram as social infrastructures play a role in facilitating the two main elements of CoP: as the platform where the community is formed and the occurrence of the community-shared practice. Therefore, this study showed how the concepts of social infrastructure and CoP is indicative of social infrastructure being a precondition for CoP to occur.

## 5.2. Practical implications

There are some practical implications for the social media industry, particularly for Twitter and Instagram. First, Twitter and Instagram could improve their features that support the convenience of community interaction. During the interviews, participants complained about some features that made them uncomfortable in social interaction and community activities. For example, Instagram *Hashtag* searches cannot be filtered more precisely, and Twitter *Space* cannot restrict listeners to fandom members. Therefore, Twitter and Instagram can improve these features by allowing Twitter Space users to set who can join the discussion or making Instagram Hashtag searches filterable.

Second, the study may encourage Twitter and Instagram to invest more in community-building technology and features. Based on the interviews, participants still feel at ease using Twitter and Instagram because they are the most popular platforms for fandoms. Both social media platforms are also, for the time being, best suited for fandom communities and activities. However, if new social media platforms emerge that better serve fans and fandom communities, it is possible that they will abandon Twitter and Instagram. Thus, if Twitter and Instagram do not want their user base to decline, they must continue to improve their community features.

Finally, this study is also relevant for other social media platforms or online platforms that want to develop technology and features for the community. Fans are constantly looking for new online platforms that can assist them with fan activities and allow them to socialize

with other fans. If other social media platforms can provide a space for activities and socializing that also meets community needs and practices, many communities will choose them. Of course, this will increase the number of people using those social media platforms.

### **5.3. Limitation and recommendations for future research**

This study adds new knowledge about the dynamics between the online social infrastructure and the online Community of Practice (CoP) formation in fandom. However, some limitations need to be considered and improved in future research in media, communication, and fans studies. The first limitation is some interviews through video calls were affected due to a connectivity problem and background noise. This situation may have caused participants to be distracted while answering questions. Second, four interviews in this study used chat interviews via WhatsApp and Instagram because participants felt more at ease being interviewed through written chats. Interviews using this method took up to two days, whereas video call interviews took about an hour. Furthermore, because chat interviews can be conducted while doing other activities, participants may have been distracted when answering questions.

The third limitation is due to the time difference between Indonesia and The Netherlands, most video interviews were conducted in the evening in the Indonesia time zone, after the participants had finished school or work. Some interviews were also close to common Indonesian bedtime. Because the participants were likely tired from their daily activities, this situation may have influenced their interaction with the researcher. The participants may not have been as sharp as they would have been earlier in the day. The last limitation in this study is that the sample did not exist of an even number of female and male participants. The participants were dominated by females, 20 out of 22. Because there were more female participants, this may have influenced the results to have a more feminine nuance. The fact that female participants outnumber male participants can be attributed to this study's use of convenience and side snowballing. With these two sampling methods, researchers recruit participants from a convenient population sample, and people who have already been interviewed more often know and recommend other potential participants who are similar to themselves (Baxter et al., 2015).

Based on this study, some recommendations can be considered for future research. First, as mentioned above, the participants of this study were dominated by female participants. Whereas, having equal numbers of the various genders of participants can give interesting

answers due to their different perspectives. Therefore, future research could consider having equal distributions of the various genders of participants in order to broaden the scope of the study's findings. Second, when using chat interviews for further research, several factors must be considered. Chat interviews should be avoided if research time is limited. On the other hand, because participants can send sample pictures/videos to add or clarify their answers, this type of interview can be used to obtain more detailed answers. Furthermore, this type of interview allows participants enough time to read and comprehend the question before responding. Chat interviews are also appropriate when participants are used to expressing themselves through writing, as they do in fan activities on social media.

Moreover, this study used Twitter and Instagram as potential online social infrastructure. This choice is because they are the most widely used by fans in Indonesia. However, new social media platforms are constantly emerging as technology advances. Fans are also always seeking new social media and online platforms to accommodate fan and fandom activities. Thus, future research can consider using other social media or online platforms as potential online social infrastructure in the study. The fourth recommendation is that with the discovery of the relationship between online social infrastructure and CoP, future research can apply it to other communities or organizations such as business organizations or formal learning communities to enrich insights about the dynamics between online social infrastructure and CoP. Finally, this study focuses on social media as an online social infrastructure for the fan community, where the initial social infrastructure concept is about offline settings such as cafes, parks, and others (Klinenberg, 2018a). Therefore, it would be interesting for future research to compare offline and online settings as social infrastructure in forming fandom in forming fan practice communities.

#### **5.4. Conclusion**

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between online social infrastructure and online CoP by looking at how Thai series fans in Indonesia socialize and form communities on Twitter and Instagram. This study found that fans primarily use Twitter and Instagram to socialize with others and form fandom communities. Twitter and Instagram also have become platforms to do community practice, leading to a learning process within the fandom. Fans not only learn fans-related knowledge and skills such writing fanfiction, but also the knowledge they can use in their daily life such as foreign languages. Various features on Twitter and Instagram serve as community-supporting facilities, even though some

features still need improvements such as Instagram's Explore, needing to allow users to refine hashtag searches based on the latest or trending topics. The result of this study enlightens the relationship between social infrastructure and the CoP concept. This study discovered that social infrastructure is a precondition for CoP because it is where two main elements of CoP form and occur, community and shared practices.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A**

#### **Information sheet**

##### **Study title:**

Exploring the Dynamic Between Online Social Infrastructure and Online Community of practice in Social Media Fandom

##### **Background and Purpose of the study:**

1. This study is conducted as part of a master's thesis project at the Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences at the University of Twente
2. The purpose of this study is to explore the dynamics of online social infrastructure and online Community of Practice (CoP) in Thai series fandom in Indonesia.

##### **Procedures:**

The interview will be lasting approximately 60 minutes. You as participant will be asked questions about their own experiences using Twitter/Instagram regarding fandom activities, practices, and interaction in fan community.

##### **Potential risks and discomforts:**

There are no known risks associated with participation in this research. This study has been reviewed and approved by the Behavioral, Management, and Social Sciences Ethics Committee, University of Twente. You do not have to answer any questions they do not wish to answer. Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to discontinue your participation at any time.

##### **Potential benefits and compensation:**

Participation in this study does not guarantee that you will get benefit from it. There is no monetary compensation for taking part in this study.

##### **Confidentiality:**

No personally identifiable information will be reported in any research product. This research project involves making audio recordings of interview with you. For the purposes of study data,

the audio recording of this interview session will be recorded. Audio recordings will also be transcribed as text. The transcripts will be anonymized in order to ensure your privacy. The audio recording will be deleted after the study ends. The data and results of this interview will be processed confidentially and used only for analysis and/or quoted in study outputs. Any summary of the content of the interview or direct excerpt from the interview available through academic publications will be anonymized to ensure that you cannot be identified.

**Right to withdraw and questions:**

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify. The data you provided before you stopped participating however will be processed in this research; no new data will be collected or used.

If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, please contact the researcher: Carla Isati Octama ([carlaisatioctama@student.utwente.nl](mailto:carlaisatioctama@student.utwente.nl)). For study problems or any other question regarding the study project, the Secretary of the Ethics Commission of the faculty Behavioural, Management, and Social Sciences University of Twente may be contacted through [ethicscommittee-bms@utwente.nl](mailto:ethicscommittee-bms@utwente.nl).

## **Consent form**

### **Study title:**

Exploring the Dynamic Between Online Social Infrastructure and Online Community of practice in Social Media Fandom

### **Taking part in the study**

1. I have read and understood the study information sheet. I have been able to ask questions and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I also understand that I am free to contact the researcher with any questions I may have in the future.
2. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and I can withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason.
3. I understand that taking part in the study involves participating in a personal interview, which will be audio-recorded. Recordings will be transcribed as text and original recordings will be deleted after completion of the research project. Any summary of the content of the interview or direct excerpt from the interview made available through academic publications will be anonymized.

### **Use of the information in the study**

1. I understand that all or part of the content of the interview will be used for publication of the concerned master's thesis and related other academic publications
2. I understand that personal information collected about me that can identify me will not be shared beyond the responsible researcher and data will be processed anonymized.
3. I agree that I can be quoted directly in the resulting research output with safeguarding that quotes will be anonymized.
4. I agree to being audio-recorded during the interview.
5. I give permission to the researcher to keep my contact information and to contact me if necessary for the needs of the research study.

## Appendix B

### Interview guideline

#### Introduction

Thank you for participating in this interview. This interview is conducted as part of my research on my master's thesis in Communication Studies at the University of Twente. This study aims to explore the relationship of Twitter and Instagram as facilities for social interaction and community formation in Thai series fandom in Indonesia. Therefore, I will ask you about your experiences using Twitter/Instagram for fandom activities. Before we start, I already send to you an informed consent form. Have you read the informed consent form and voluntarily agree to participate in this study? And are you allowing me to audio-record our conversation? (If participant say yes to all questions, start record)

**Table 2**

*Topic and Questions Guideline*

Themes	Topics	Sub-topics	Questions
Introductory questions			Background: How old are you? What is your current occupation and/or educational level? With which pronouns would you like to be addressed?  Warm-up: How long have you been a fan of Thai series? How did you become a fan? Are you just a fan of one series or are there several series that you follow? What kinds of fan activities on Twitter/Instagram do you usually do?
Social infrastructure	Social relationships (Alaimo& Kallinikos', 2019; Klinenberg, 2018a; Latham & Layton, 2019)	Establish contact ( <i>Build contacts and interactions on social media</i> )	How do you interact with other fans on Twitter/Instagram? What kind of relationship that happen after interactions in Twitter/Instagram? In what ways does Twitter/Instagram help you to develop new relations within the fandom?

		<p>Preserve contact <i>(Maintain contacts and relationships on social media)</i></p>	<p>Can you tell me what kind of relationship you have with fans in the fandom on Twitter/Instagram? What do you do to maintain contact with them? How do you use Twitter/Instagram to maintain contacts with other fans?</p>
		<p>Mutual support <i>(Giving and receiving support within the fandom obtained from people on social media)</i></p>	<p>Have you received/given support from/to a fellow member of your fandom? If so, what kind of support? If not, in what kind of situation would you consider asking for/giving support within the fandom? How would you ask for support on Twitter/Instagram within the fandom? How do other fans react to such support requests? And how would you provide support within the fandom on Twitter/Instagram if you were able to?</p>
	<p>Facilities/Features (Latham &amp; Layton, 2019)</p>	<p>Type of features <i>(Features social media that people use to interact and engage in activities with others)</i></p>	<p>Talking about the social media you use for fandom activities, of course, you can use many features on that platform. How important is it for your fandom that Twitter/Instagram has a wide variety of features? What kind of features do you use on Twitter/Instagram for fandom activities?</p>
		<p>Function <i>(The function of social media features to accommodate fan interactions and activities)</i></p>	<p>What are the advantages which are provided by the features you use? Can you give an example of how these features relate to the interactions you have on Twitter/Instagram?</p>
<p>Connection between social infrastructure and CoP</p>	<p>Elements of CoP (Wenger, 1998, Wenger et al., 2002)</p>	<p>Joint enterprise (Domain) <i>(What is the community about, and how are people involved in achieving community goals)</i></p>	<p>Talking about your fandom, I would like to know: what do you hope to achieve by joining the fandom on Twitter/Instagram? How could the community help you to achieve your hopes? To what extent do you have interests and passions in common with theirs? Why do you think like that?</p>

<p>Mutual engagement (Community) <i>(Interaction between community members that results in the development of a shared meaning of topics or problems)</i></p>	<p>Talking about your goal of following your fandom on Twitter/Instagram, what did you do to realize that goal? What joint activities do you participate in with other fans on Twitter/Instagram? What role do you have? How do you know if an account is part of your fandom on Twitter/Instagram? In your opinion, what is the difference between new and old fans user accounts? How is the interaction different between new and old fans user accounts? From the various activities and interactions, you have with them, how are the relationship dynamics within the fandom? How do you respond to the dynamics that occur?</p>	
<p>Shared repertoire (Practice) <i>(The common resources and jargons used by community members to negotiate meaning and facilitate learning)</i></p>	<p>Could you tell me about any unique routines within this fandom on Twitter/Instagram? How did they become a routine? Could you tell me about any memorable stories within your fandom on Twitter/Instagram. Could you tell me about any tools you use for fan activities on Twitter/Instagram? Could you share any kind of term/language/jargon you use within the fandom on Twitter/Instagram? And could you give me some examples when you use that?</p>	
<p>Learning process (Malik &amp; Haidar, 2020a; Wenger, 1998, Wenger et al., 2002)</p>	<p>What is being learned <i>(What is being learned and shared through observation and interaction with members of the community)</i></p>	<p>What is your opinion on the idea that you can gain new insights by joining the Twitter/Instagram fandom? Compared to your current experience, what insights or learning experiences do you get from participating in activities and interacting with other fans? Could you elaborate more on that?</p>

	<p>Role of social media as platform of learning <i>The role of social media in the learning process and knowledge sharing in the community)</i></p>	<p>What are your thoughts on the role of the Twitter/Instagram you use in gaining and sharing insights within the fandom? Could you give me an example based on your experience? What are your thoughts about Twitter/Instagram features in gaining insights/learning within the fandom?</p>
<p>Interactivity and community through social media</p>	<p>Reasons of choosing social media <i>(Reasons of choosing social media as platform for community to interact)</i></p>	<p>How did you come to use Twitter/Instagram as a platform to engage in fans activities and with the community? Why do you choose Twitter/Instagram for your fans activities and interactions with community? How do you think the use of Twitter/Instagram affects the interactions within the fan community?</p>
	<p>Role of social media in community <i>(The role and importance of social media in community)</i></p>	<p>How would you describe the role of Twitter/Instagram in your fan community? Can you give some examples? What do you think would happen if there is no Twitter/Instagram in your fandom?</p>

### **Closing**

I think I already asked every question. Do you have anything to add?

Then I'd like to say thank you for speaking with me. I'd also like to know if I can contact you again if I have additional questions or if something is unclear. Is that alright? And one more thing, can you recommend me someone whom I can talk with about this topic?

## Appendix C

### Final codebook

**Table 3***Final codebook*

Theme	Category	Codes	Description	Example Quote
<b>Social Infrastructure</b>	Twitter and Instagram as platforms for social relationships	Establish contact	Participants build contacts and interactions on Twitter/Instagram	“For example, if there is a fanfiction author that I like. I want to appreciate their work, so I'm DM-ing them to tell how I like the story, and finally, we talk a lot.”
		Absence of introductory preambles	There are no introductory preambles, as if conversations and interactions are just the continuation of a continuous process (Wenger, 1998)	“We called it "JBJB" on Twitter. That means that even if we don't know each other, we can immediately comment on, give likes, or Quote Retweet other fans' tweets.”
		Preserve contact	Participants maintain contacts and relationships on Twitter/Instagram	“Because of the intensity of the interaction with them. Because we've been talking for more than 6 months, so I think they've already become my friends.”
		Mutual support	Giving and receiving support within the fandom obtained from people on Twitter/Instagram	“Several times, I saw friends who needed encouragement or had a bad day or those who did not pass the college exam test, so I gave support by giving words of encouragement.”
	Reasons like Thai series	Participants' reasons why they like to watch Thai series	“The Covid-19 pandemic is the main reason. Watching the Thai series and joining the fandom is one way for me to stay sane at home.”	
	Features supporting activities and social life in fandom	Activities	Participants' fans activities on Twitter/Instagram	“Usually, I share my reviews and opinions about the series on Twitter. I also love to share actors' and actresses' photos. I also write fanfictions about the series.”



Features for activities and interactions	What types and how qualities of facilities that facilitate social life (Latham and Layton, 2019). In this code, Instagram/Twitter features that participants use to interact and engage in activities with others	“On Instagram, I use Instagram Story to reposting photos or videos of the artist or fanbase. I also use Instagram Story to see the artist's current update activities.”
Features accommodate activities	Participants think/have had experiences that Twitter/Instagram features accommodated their fan activities.	“The Thread is very useful because it puts our tweets in order if you write an AU (Alternate Universe, fanfiction). With Thread, it is helpful to keep track of what we have written. It is also helpful because it connects our tweets of stories so the stories continuously don't break up.”
Features accommodate interaction	Participants think/have had experiences that Twitter/Instagram features accommodated their interactions with others in fandom	“I often use Instagram Story because apart from disappearing after 24 hours, my friends who see my Instagram Story can comment if they understand the Thai series content that I post.”
Features helps to find and share information	Participants think/have had experiences that Twitter/Instagram features help them to find and/or share information related to series, actors, and actresses	“On Twitter and Instagram, all we have to do is type the hashtag or what we want to search for with the search feature. After that, a variety of information that we seek will appear there.”
Instagram limitations	What participant perceives as limitations of Instagram features	“I think replying to comments is easier on Twitter than on Instagram. For me, it's too difficult to give comments on Instagram because all comments are in sequence.”

		Twitter limitations	What participant perceives as limitations of Twitter features	“But unfortunately, the speakers (on <i>Space</i> ) are limited to a maximum of 10 people who can speak at the same time and also only people who are approved by the host. Of course, <i>Space</i> helps us to interact, but the downside is not many people can't join in the conversations.”
<b>The role of Twitter and Instagram as social infrastructure in online CoP</b>	Developing online community of practice through Twitter and Instagram	Community knows have same interest	Participants know/realize the members of the fan community have the same interest.	“I meant we support the same idol, with equal adoration and love.”
		Community provides information	Participants know/realize the members of the fan community are helping each other in providing and sharing information.	“For me, the community does help. I mean, even though I don't always check the information, the fans in the community will always give updated information to others.”
		Community provides interactions	Participants know/realize the members of the fan community on Instagram providing them with relationships, friendships, and support.	“The fan community is really helpful because we usually hype the artist together.”
		Reasons for joining fandom	Participant reasons for joining fandom	“I joined the fandom because I like the series and the actors. Also, I want to find information about the series and the actors.”
		Fan identification on social media	Participants' descriptions of who belongs in their community	“To find out if the account is part of the fan community, usually we can look at their avatar, username, and sometimes their bio if they mentioned about Thai series or actors.”

	Hierarchy within fandom	Power hierarchy among the members of the community (Malik&Haidar, 2020a)	“Their (large accounts) followers listen to and approve of their opinions, but in reality, their opinions are very problematic and can lead to war.”
	Join activities	Members of Community of Practice (CoP) pursue their interests in their domain by participating in joint activities (Wenger, 1998)	“I have also participated in food truck donations. Usually, this is the one initiating the fanbase on the auto base or one fan, and then they initially invite their mutuals, then it becomes a snowball inviting each other to other fans.”
	Mutual engagement	Mutual engagement refers to interactions between community members that result in the development of shared meaning on problems. Mutual engagement can be harmonious or conflictual (Wenger, 1998)	“The fandom is harmonious. We support each other, and because we know our goal is to support the series and the artist, we are a solid fandom.”
	Shared repertoire	The common resources and jargon used by group members to negotiate meaning and facilitate learning (Li et al., 2009). Shared repertoire can be in form of language, routines, sensibilities, artifacts, tools, or stories (Wenger, 1998)	“I think there are, for example, calling older ones ‘phi’ and younger ones ‘nong’. Then if at the end of the sentence like, add ‘kha’, ‘krab’. There are also swear words like ‘shia’ or ‘alai wa’ that we learn from the series, and we apply that in our regular conversation.”
Learning process in community on Twitter and Instagram	What being learned	What is being learned and shared through observation and interaction with members of the community on Twitter/Instagram	“I think this interaction with overseas fans must subconsciously makes our foreign language skills improve little by little. We may not be fully aware, or we really don't have a goal for learning more language, but the positive effects are definitely there.”

	Reach new fans	Instagram is a platform for nonfans to be exposed to and know about Thai series and artists	“Because I use my personal account, my friends usually have something like, 'What do you always post about that all the time?' However, in the end, because I post so often, they get curious and ask me questions (about the series and actors).”
	Features helps to learn	Participants think/have experiences about Twitter/Instagram features that help them in gaining insights/learning within the fandom	“I also saw some fans make a Thread about an artist's interview from Thai to English or Indonesian. So, they make a series of tweets about the translation of what the artist said, along with explanations of the meaning.”
	Platform of learning	Participants think/have experiences where Twitter/Instagram is a platform where they can learn something and share their knowledge in their community	“I agree that social media can be a place to find new experiences or knowledge. The features are also helpful. For example, like Reels, with the help of Reels, there are now more videos that teach the Thai language.”
Interactivity and community through social media	Reasons choose social media	Participants' reasons for choosing Twitter/Instagram as a platform to join the fan community	“Because on Twitter, we can be anonymous. We can create new personas and do not need to show our true identities. So, I feel more comfortable on Twitter because I can interact with many people without me knowing their backgrounds or they know my real identity.”
	If there is no Instagram for fandom	Participants' thoughts about what will happen if there is no Instagram for their fan community	“I guess if there were not Twitter and Instagram, we would go back to the past. We can only watch the series on YouTube; after that, we are confused about whom to hype. We can only hype with our real-life close friends if they also like it.”

If there is no Twitter for fandom	Participants' thoughts about what will happen if there is no Twitter for their fan community	“It will be empty for fandom. It will be difficult to interact without Twitter because there are so many interactions there (on Twitter).”
Platform to activity	Participants think that the role of Twitter/Instagram in the community as a platform to do fandom activities	“Twitter, in my opinion, is the best place for fan and community activities.”
Platform to find and share information	Participants think that the role of Twitter/Instagram in the community as a platform to find and/or share information with other fans in the fandom	“I see Twitter and Instagram as a source to get fast and accurate information, apart from Google.”
Platform to gather and interact	Participants think that the role of Twitter/Instagram in the community as a platform to gather, interact, and make relations with other members/fans in the fandom	“Social media is really like a realm for people who have the same interest in series and actors, so we meet on there, communicate with each other, and the community is there too.”