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A social network analysis of fan engagement in 'Queen of Tears'

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Abstract The development of digital media has transformed how fans interact with and consume popular culture, particularly Korean dramas. *Queen of Tears* exemplifies an online marketing strategy that leverages the power of YouTube as a social network platform. Fans are not merely passive consumers; they also actively participate in activities that support the drama. The purpose of this study is to analyse the fan communication networks surrounding the Korean drama *Queen of Tears* on the Netflix K-Content YouTube channel, specifically the video 'Queen of Tears Cast Reveals Secrets to Each Other | Office Hours | Netflix'. This research employed the Social Network Analysis (SNA) using Gephi 9.0 to process comment data. The results revealed two types of communication network patterns: wheel communication patterns and chain communication patterns. The main actor within the network is @fourleafclover-ww1mm, who demonstrates significant influence in conversations on the Netflix K-Content YouTube channel, as indicated by centrality indicator values. These findings highlight the potential effectiveness of YouTube as a platform for fostering fan engagement and promoting Korean dramas. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of social network analysis in fandom and digital media research. In practice, it provides insights into how fan interactions can be optimised for content promotion strategies in the entertainment industry.

Keywords: communication network; Korean drama; social network analysis; YouTube

INTRODUCTION

The transformation of the digital media landscape over the past decade has fundamentally changed the way global audiences consume, interact with, and engage in entertainment content. This era of media convergence has been characterised by the emergence of digital platforms that function not only as content distribution channels but also as social spaces that facilitate the formation of virtual communities and complex fan networks (Burgess & Green, 2009; Kellner, 2020; Surahman, 2024). Within this context, the *Hallyu* or Korean Wave phenomenon has become one of the most influential forces in global popular culture, which has shown rapid growth since the 1990s as a hub for the international dissemination of South Korean culture through music, film, and the entertainment industry (Maharani, 2020; Jin, 2023). The Korean Wave is further strengthened by the presence of digital platforms that allow for the massive and instantaneous spread of South Korean content (Jin & Yoon, 2016). The study of Korean drama promotion through digital media is, therefore, essential. Fan activities on platforms such as YouTube are not only reflections of entertainment consumption but also play a role in shaping communication networks, strengthening digital fandom, and supporting the global circulation of cultural products (Saleem et al., 2023). Understanding this phenomenon is crucial to explaining how fans act both as audiences and as active agents in the promotion of Korean dramas.

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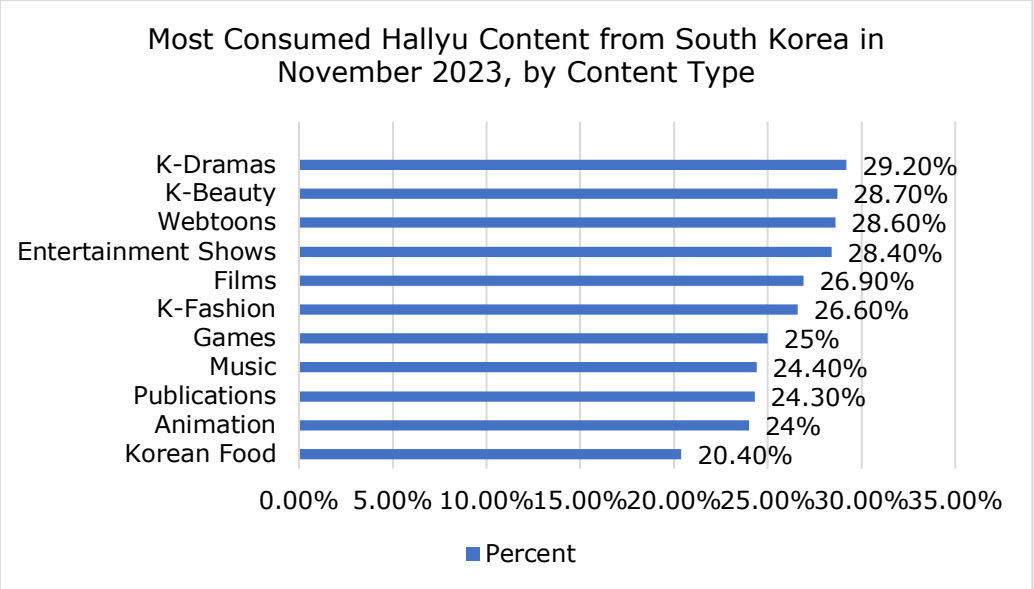

Figure 1. Hallyu content in 26 countries
Source: Korean Foundation for International Cultural Exchange; Research lab (2024)

The success of Korean dramas demonstrates their extensive global impact, including in Indonesia, where audience enthusiasm has grown consistently (Maulidya & Hidayat, 2023; Ahmad et al., 2024). Korean dramas, typically fictional television series consisting of 16–20 episodes, depict everyday life stories in engaging and relatable ways (Musrin et al., 2022). According to data from the Korean Foundation for International Cultural Exchange (2024), as illustrated in Figure 1, as of November 2023, Korean dramas accounted for 29.2% of global *Hallyu* content consumption, surpassing other cultural exports such as K-Beauty (28.7%) and webtoons (28.6%). This indicates that Korean dramas are not merely entertainment products but also cultural commodities that shape audience lifestyles, values, and digital engagement (Choi & Kessler, 2025).

Accordingly, Queen of Tears became one of the most popular South Korean productions in the first half of 2024 (Muktisari, 2024). Beyond its storyline and production quality, the drama represents how Korean drama content is strategically promoted through digital media ecosystems. YouTube, in particular, plays a key role not only in content distribution but also in shaping fan communities and generating user-driven promotional activities (Prolintan & Syam, 2020; Putri et al., 2022; Osman et al., 2025). Previous studies further indicate that YouTube engagement is sustained through social contagion processes, where visible interactions and influencer-related characteristics foster audience retention and sustained engagement and repeated participation (Chen et al., 2024). Within this participatory media environment, audience engagement extends beyond passive consumption, as fans actively contribute through interaction, emotional expression, and parasocial attachment to media figures on social media platforms (Vu et al., 2025). Unlike Twitter, which is often used for fast-paced discussions, YouTube comments provide more durable, visible, and interactive traces of fan engagement that can be systematically analysed. YouTube, therefore, serves as a valuable site for examining fan-based social networks and their role in promotional strategies.

Several previous studies on fan culture and social network analysis have examined interactions on platforms such as Twitter (now X) (Maharani & Astuti, 2024; Kartikasari et al., 2023). Recent studies have begun to examine parasocial interaction within YouTube comment sections of K-Pop content, highlighting the platform's role as a space for affective expression and fandom communication (Flimchum et al., 2024). However, these studies have yet to fully explore the analytical value of YouTube comments, which offer richer insights into engagement patterns, community formation, and promotional impact. This reveals a research gap in fandom studies, particularly concerning how YouTube functions both as a site of fan interaction and as an informal promotional tool for the entertainment industry. Theoretically, applying Social Network Analysis (SNA) to YouTube-based fandom enables researchers to map influence, connectivity,

and information flows within fan communities. Practically, it offers insights into how entertainment industries can optimise fan-driven interactions for promotion. Therefore, this study aims to analyse fan communication networks in the Netflix K-Content YouTube video "Queen of Tears Cast Reveals Secrets to Each Other | Office Hours | Netflix" using SNA. Specifically, it seeks to identify communication patterns, influential actors, and dominant themes within the fan community, while highlighting their implications for fandom studies and content promotion strategies.

The Social Network Analysis (SNA) method enables researchers to examine the structure and dynamics of communication interactions among large numbers of accounts in digital media (Nie et al., 2023; Harnita et al., 2024). Through SNA, it is possible to identify patterns of connectivity, influence, and information flow within online networks (Efendi et al., 2023; Reselina & Astuti, 2024). In the context of Korean drama content promotion on YouTube, this approach not only maps who interacts with whom but also provides insights into how fans participate in meaning-making processes and become active nodes within digital fandom. This analytical approach situates the study within broader discussions of media and popular culture, where fandom is increasingly understood not merely as cultural consumption but as networked participation in digital communication. Academically, this study contributes to fan studies by demonstrating how actors within fan networks construct discourse and meaning around promotional content. Practically, the findings highlight how entertainment industries can optimise YouTube fan engagement as part of integrated promotional strategies, where fans function as indirect yet influential agents of distribution. Socially, the study underscores the dynamics of online communities that emerge within YouTube comment sections, showing how collective fan interactions extend beyond entertainment to collaborative promotion and cultural circulation.

Previous research related to social network analysis of digital media has been conducted by several scholars. Maharani & Astuti (2024) in their study '*Analisis Jaringan Twitter pada Interaksi Penggemar K-pop Menggunakan Pendekatan Social Network Analytic*', explains that Twitter provides a platform for K-pop fans to share opinions and interact, but it also becomes a site of negative comments and fan conflicts, highlighting the complexity of network structures and their impact on fan image. Similarly, Kartikasari et al., (2023) in 'Marketing Content Analysis of Korean Drama Streaming Platforms: Social Network Analysis on Twitter', reveal that distribution patterns and tweet correlations related to VIU and iQiyi help focus user discussions and shape their content preferences. Despite these contributions, several limitations remain. Previous studies have lacked data-driven quantitative analyses of the YouTube platform and have not sufficiently explored communication patterns within YouTube comment sections. Research by Harnita et al., (2024) '*Pusat Informasi Bencana Merapi: Kompetisi Jurnalisme Pemerintah, Media dan Warga di Twitte*r', further highlights how Twitter plays a crucial role in disaster communication by forming communication patterns among three main actors, offering effective solutions for risk mitigation. Building on these gaps, this study addresses the lack of analysis of YouTube as a site of fan interaction compared to Twitter. While previous research has mostly examined the fast-paced and fragmented discussions typical of Twitter (Maharani & Astuti, 2024; Kartikasari et al., 2023). YouTube comments provide analytically valuable data because they are more durable, visible, and directly tied to promotional content.

With those findings in place, this research enriches the field of digital fandom and cultural promotion by demonstrating how YouTube functions not only as a distribution platform but also as a participatory space where fans engage in interaction, meaning-making, and indirect promotion of cultural products. At the methodological level, it contributes by applying Social Network Analysis (SNA) to YouTube-based fandom, extending the use of network analysis beyond Twitter-centric studies. Accordingly, this study focused on fan communication networks in the Netflix K-Content YouTube video 'Queen of Tears Cast Reveals Secrets to Each Other | Office Hours | Netflix'. It aimed to identify communication patterns among fans, determine the most influential actors in the network, and examine dominant themes through word cloud analysis to better understand fan engagement with promotional content. By combining structural network analysis with thematic exploration, this study provides deeper insights into how Korean drama content fans interact in the digital ecosystem, particularly in promoting and discussing *Queen of Tears* through YouTube. The findings are expected to contribute

academically to digital media and fandom studies, while also offering practical insights for the entertainment industry in optimising fan engagement as part of its promotional strategies.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative approach using Social Network Analysis (SNA) with Gephi 9.0 software to visualise and measure the structure of communication networks. SNA enables the identification of actors (nodes) and their relationships (edges), thereby mapping interaction patterns within social media networks (Kurniawan et al., 2020; Pranaya, 2023).

The object of analysis was the Netflix K-Content YouTube channel, focusing on the video 'Queen of Tears Cast Reveals Secrets to Each Other | Office Hours | Netflix'. YouTube was selected because it is one of the most widely used social media platforms both in Indonesia and globally, with 167 million users in Indonesia in 2024 (Hootsuite (We Are Social), 2025). Its interactive comment feature allows audiences to engage in conversations, exchange opinions, and form digital fan communities (Buckley, 2020; Hidayat et al., 2024). The chosen video features the main cast of *Queen of Tears* and generated high engagement, making it an appropriate site for examining fan interactions and communication networks.

Data was retrieved using YouTube Data Tools, which enable the extraction of comments, metadata, and interaction networks in .csv format. The dataset consisted of 681 user accounts (nodes) and 90 interaction relationships (edges) collected from the comment section of the selected video. Comments were gathered during the initial weeks following the video's release to capture audience responses at the peak of engagement (Siregar & Nugroho, 2025). The raw dataset was then cleaned by removing duplicate entries, spam, and irrelevant comments. After cleaning, the data were structured into a network format, with nodes representing user accounts and edges representing relationships (reply or mention interactions).

The dataset was subsequently imported into Gephi 9.0 for social network analysis (Utami et al., 2021; Aryanto et al., 2024). Several analytical steps were undertaken, including the calculation of graph size (nodes and edges), density (0.000), modularity (0.64), diameter (1), average degree (0.132), and average path length (1). Centrality measures—namely degree, betweenness, closeness, and eigenvector centrality were applied to identify the most influential actors within the network. The ForceAtlas2 layout was used to map clusters and highlight central nodes. In addition to the network analysis, word cloud analysis was conducted to identify dominant discussion themes, complementing the structural findings by highlighting the content focus of fan interactions. These procedures ensured that the research process was systematic, replicable, and capable of capturing both the structural and thematic dimensions of fan interactions on YouTube.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Network pattern

The communication network formed in the comment section of the Netflix K-Content YouTube video *'Queen of Tears Cast Reveals Secrets to Each Other | Office Hours | Netflix'* demonstrates two dominant interaction patterns, namely wheel and chain, as illustrated in Figure 2. Audience interactions within digital narrative platforms operate through structured communication pathways that shape how engagement circulates among viewers (Zhang et al., 2025). Within this context, the wheel communication pattern dominates the network visualisation, where central actors connect other actors within the network (Efendi et al., 2023; Osman et al., 2025). Actors in this network demonstrate relatively low cohesiveness, as they do not necessarily know each other personally. Accounts such as @fourleafclover-ww1mm, @ltskratikahere, @lizzydiaz1225, @janjan794, @cheyennevillamor4991, and @xpolarisx serve as central hubs of information within the wheel pattern. In contrast, the chain communication pattern is characterised by actors forwarding information sequentially to the next actor, resulting in slower dissemination and more complex feedback processes (Halim & Husna, 2023). This pattern was observed in the interactions of accounts such as @anupmazumder8765 and @Wild_flower_0203.

The identification of these two patterns highlights different dynamics of information flow within the fan community. The wheel pattern reflects a centralised flow of interaction in which one or a few actors function as information hubs. This indicates that the dissemination of comments and discussions about *Queen of Tears* tends to revolve around a small number of highly visible users. Such a structure accelerates information exchange but also creates

dependency on central actors, who function as opinion leaders or conversation initiators (Efendi et al., 2023). Conversely, the chain pattern illustrates a more linear and fragmented mode of interaction, where information moves slowly from one actor to another without strong feedback loops. This finding is consistent with Harnita et al., (2024), who note that chain-like structures reduce the efficiency of communication and complicate the formation of collective discussions.

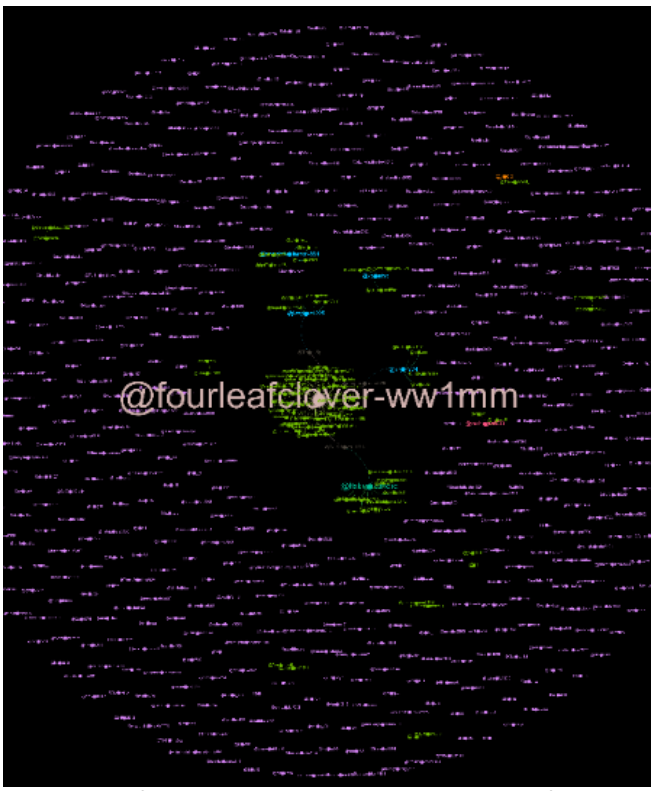

Figure 2. Network visualisation on Netflix YouTube Channel K-Content 'Queen of Tears' Cast Reveal Secrets to Each Other | Office Hours | Netflix'
Source: Author's process with Gephi software (2025)

In the context of fan interaction, these patterns suggest that the YouTube comment section functions as a semi-structured participatory space, where fans predominantly respond to central comments rather than engaging in broad, multi-directional exchanges. This observation resonates with Burgess and Green, (2009), who view that YouTube serves not only as a content distribution platform but also as a participatory arena in which community hierarchies and influence emerge. The dominance of wheel patterns reflects the tendency of digital fandoms to cluster around visible fan accounts or opinion leaders, a phenomenon that Jin (2024) identifies as a key mechanism of the New Korean Wave's digital ecosystem. These findings underscore that fan communities on YouTube are not homogeneous but shaped by both centralised hubs and peripheral chains. This creates layered forms of participation that influence how promotional content circulates in digital spaces. Such patterns also align with Maulina et al., (2024), who highlight that female Korean culture fans construct subcultures rooted in pleasure, creativity, and sisterhood. Even within fragmented or centralised communication patterns, fandom networks continue to nurture solidarity and shared identity, reinforcing the participatory nature of digital fan communities.

Network structure

The broadcast of the Netflix K-Content YouTube video 'Queen of Tears Cast Reveals Secrets to Each Other | Office Hours | Netflix' received responses from a wide range of fans. The structure of the communication network built within the comment section is presented in Table 1.

The structure of the communication network within the comment section is presented in Table 1, consisting of 681 nodes and 90 edges. The nodes represent the positions of actors within the network, whereas edges represent the interaction relationships between these actors

(Utami et al., 2021). The size analysis shows that 681 actors (user accounts) are involved in the network, generating 90 interaction relationships through comments in the Netflix K-Content YouTube video.

Table 1. Network structure

Analysis	Data
Size	Nodes : 681 Edges : 90
Graph Density	0,000
Modularity	0,64
Diameter	1
Average Degree	0,132
Average Path Length	1

Source: Author's calculation using Gephi (2025)

Graph density reflects the intensity of communication within the network. A higher density value indicates denser interactions between nodes. In this network, the graph density of 0.000 reveals that the network is highly sparse and lacks strong connections among nodes. Most nodes do not interact directly with each other, and only a few nodes function as communication centres. Modularity refers to the grouping of actors within the network. A higher modularity value indicates a stronger community structure, where nodes tend to form clusters with closer internal connections than connections to other groups (Hernández et al., 2025). The modularity value of 0.64 indicates that the network has a fairly strong community structure, with nodes forming distinct groups.

Diameter measures the greatest distance between two nodes. A smaller diameter indicates shorter distances within the network. A network diameter of 1 illustrates that almost all nodes with direct connections are connected in one step, allowing information to spread quickly without intermediaries. Average degree reflects the mean number of links connecting nodes. A higher value indicates faster information dissemination within the network. The average degree value of 0.132 shows that, on average, each node has few or no relationships with other nodes. This is consistent with the low graph density. Average path length measures the average distance between any two nodes. A small average path length indicates that information can spread rapidly. The average path length of 1 shows that information can travel between nodes in a single step, illustrating high efficiency in potential information dissemination despite the low density.

Influential actors

The identification of influential actors in the communication network of the Netflix K-Content YouTube video 'Queen of Tears Cast Reveals Secrets to Each Other | Office Hours | Netflix' was conducted through centrality analysis. The results reveal a hierarchical communication structure, in which certain actors occupy more central positions within the network. This hierarchical structure reflects automated forms of parasociality, where digital platforms facilitate personalised yet asymmetrical relationships between audiences and visible actors or accounts (Andrejevic & Volcic, 2025; Siregar & Nugroho, 2025). Four centrality indicators were applied: degree centrality, betweenness centrality, closeness centrality, and eigenvector centrality, each providing different insights into the roles of actors within the network.

Degree centrality

Table 2 presents the calculation of actor degree centrality, indicating that @fourleafclover-ww1mm is the most influential actor, with a degree centrality value of 48 and an in-degree of 48. This account received 48 incoming interactions but did not initiate outgoing interactions (out-degree = 0). Other accounts with notable values include @ltskratikahere, @lizzydiaz1225, @janjan794, @cheyennevillamor4991, and several others, though their influence remains significantly lower. The network visualisation highlights @fourleafclover-ww1mm as the most dominant node, represented in pink, while green and blue nodes represent actors with lower levels of interaction. This structure reflects a hierarchical communication pattern, where

information flow is concentrated around a small number of central accounts. Such patterns are common in participatory platforms like YouTube, where discussions often revolve around highly visible users.

Table 2. Calculation of actor degree centrality.

No.	Analysis	Degree	In-degree	Out degree
1	@fourleafclover-ww1mm	48	48	0
2	@ltskratikahere	11	11	0
3	@lizzydiaz1225	5	5	0
4	@janjan794	5	5	0
5	@cheyennevillamor4991	5	5	0
6	@xpolarisx	5	4	1
7	@xashie_zz9633	4	3	1
8	@juyoid	3	2	1
9	@Wild_flower_0203	2	0	2
10	@anupmazumder8765	2	0	2

Source: Author's calculation using Gephi, 2025

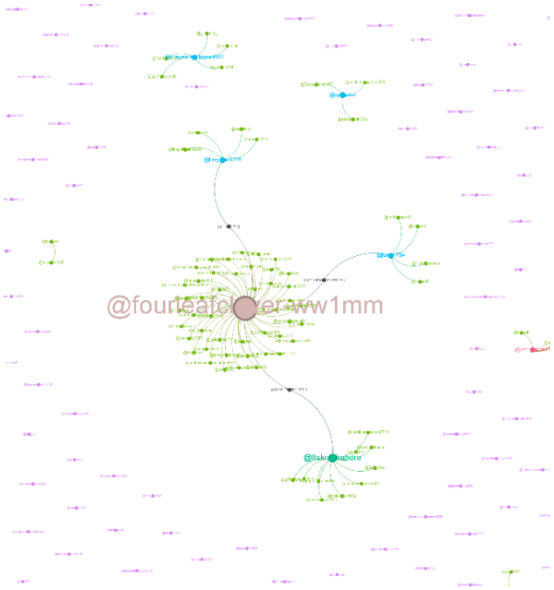

Figure 3. Visualisation of degree centrality of Netflix YouTube channel Video Network K-Content 'Queen of Tears' cast reveals secrets to each other | Office Hours | Netflix'
Source: Author's process with Gephi software (2025)

In the visualisation (Figure 3), the most dominant actor is represented in pink, while green and blue nodes indicate lower levels of interaction.

Betweenness centrality

Betweenness centrality measures the extent to which a node acts as a bridge within the network. As shown in Table 3, the results indicate that all actors have a betweenness value of 0.0, indicating the absence of intermediary roles. Information flows directly between users without mediation, which aligns with the network diameter and average path length values (both equal to 1). This finding suggests a highly centralised communication structure, with fans interacting directly with central accounts rather than through bridging actors.

Table 3. Actor betweenness centrality calculation

No.	Actor	Betweenness centrality
1	@fourleafclover-ww1mm	0,0
2	@ltskratikahere	0,0
3	@lizzydiaz1225	0,0

Source: Author's calculation using Gephi (2025)

As illustrated in Figure 4, all actors have very low betweenness centrality values. Information flows directly between users without passing through intermediaries, and no single actor controls the flow of information. This finding is consistent with the diameter and average path length data, which show that all connections are direct and do not rely on intermediary nodes.

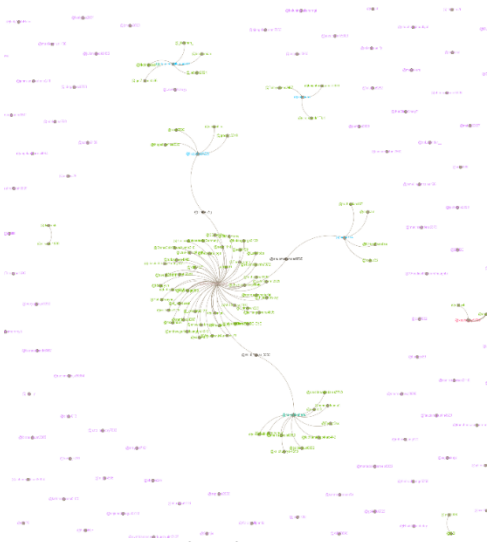

Figure 4. Visualisation of betweenness centrality of Netflix YouTube channel Video Network K-Content 'Queen of Tears' cast reveals secrets to each other | Office Hours | Netflix'
Source: Author's process with Gephi software (2025)

Closeness centrality

The analysis of closeness centrality aims to measure network proximity by calculating the shortest distance from one actor to all other actors within a network. As illustrated in Figure 5, in the network of the Netflix K-Content YouTube channel video 'Queen of Tears Cast Reveals Secrets to Each Other | Office Hours | Netflix', a total of 84 actors recorded a closeness centrality value of 1.0. Table 4 presents a sample of these calculations. This result indicates that most actors are positioned relatively close to one another, enabling information to spread quickly throughout the network. The higher the closeness centrality value, the shorter the distance between one actor and others, which increases the efficiency of information dissemination when these actors share or respond to content.

Table 4. Actor closeness centrality calculation

No.	Actor	Closeness centrality
1	@Wild_flower_0203	1,0
2	@anupmazumder8765	1,0
3	@Tinita-z5g	1,0
4	@Ammyscraft	1,0

Source: Author's calculation using Gephi (2025)

To identify the next most influential actors, the analysis also considers the popularity and importance of nodes in the network through eigenvector centrality. This measure identifies actors who occupy key roles as information references, conversation topics, network drivers, and information disseminators, based on the strength of their connections to other influential actors (Utami et al., 2021; Irwanto et al., 2025)

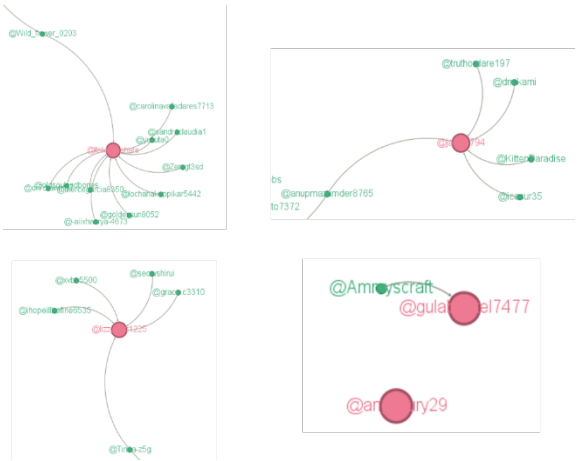

Figure 5. Visualisation of closeness centrality of Netflix YouTube channel Video Network K-Content 'Queen of Tears' cast reveals secrets to each other | Office Hours | Netflix'
Source: Author's Process with Gephi Software (2025)

Eigenvector centrality

As shown in Table 5, the actor @fourleafclover-ww1mm obtained an eigenvector centrality value of 1.0. As illustrated in Figure 6, this indicates that @fourleafclover-ww1mm is connected to many other highly influential actors within the comment network of the Netflix K-Content YouTube video 'Queen of Tears Cast Reveals Secrets to Each Other | Office Hours | Netflix'. The analysis across all four centrality indicators consistently highlights @fourleafclover-ww1mm as the dominant actor. This account functions as the focal point of audience interaction, attracting responses from numerous users while remaining relatively passive in initiating replies. Such dominance reflects a hierarchical communication structure, in which information flow is concentrated around a small number of central accounts. While this structure accelerates the circulation of comments, it simultaneously reduces overall network cohesion, as interactions are unevenly distributed among users (Irwanto et al., 2025).

Table 5. Actor eigenvector centrality calculation

No.	Actor	Eigenvector centrality
1	@fourleafclover-ww1mm	1,0
2	@xpolarisx	0,64
3	@xashie_zz9633	0,48
4	@juyoid	0,32
5	@ltskratikahere	0,22

Source: Author's calculation using Gephi (2025)

The low graph density (0.000) reinforces this interpretation: most fans do not interact directly with one another but instead cluster around highly visible accounts. This finding aligns with the observation of Burgess & Green (2009) that YouTube operates both as a participatory and broadcast-oriented platform, where discussions often orbit around prominent voices. Within the context of Korean drama content fandom, such asymmetry is common. Jin (2024) emphasises that digital fandoms frequently revolve around visible fan accounts that amplify discourse, shape actor visibility, and sustain collective enthusiasm. Similarly, Harnita et al., (2024) note that reliance on central nodes facilitates rapid but shallow information flow, limiting reciprocity among peripheral participants.

The prominence of @fourleafclover-ww1mm, therefore, illustrates how online fan networks combine openness with centralisation. Although YouTube enables horizontal interaction in principle, actual engagement remains clustered around influential accounts. This finding is consistent with previous studies on digital fan networks and highlights the hierarchical yet participatory nature of fandom-driven communication (Kartikasari et al., 2023; Efendi et al., 2023). A similar pattern has also been observed in offline cultural networks. Siregar et al., (2025) for instance, found that central actors played pivotal roles in sustaining information flow and

community cohesion in *Celempungan* and *Seren Taun* attractions. This comparison demonstrates that across both traditional cultural events and digital fandoms, the presence of influential actors remains a key factor shaping network structures and collective participation.

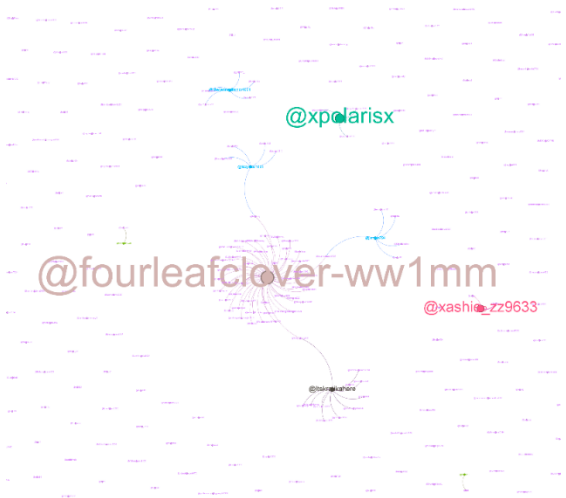

Figure 6. Visualisation of eigenvector centrality of Netflix YouTube channel Video Network K-Content 'Queen of Tears' cast reveals secrets to each other | Office Hours | Netflix'
Source: Author's process with Gephi software (2025)

Beyond these platform-specific network dynamics, the reception of Korean dramas can be situated within broader transnational flows of popular culture. Studies on the global circulation of *Hallyu* demonstrate that audiences across diverse cultural contexts actively interpret Korean drama content and negotiate meanings based on local cultural frameworks (Bija, 2024). From this perspective, the influential actors identified in the *Queen of Tears* YouTube comment network are not only central within a platform-specific structure but also embedded within wider global circuits of audience reception and cultural consumption shaped by transnational media flows. This process also reflects the role of translational audiences, where fans do not merely consume Korean cultural products but actively interpret, adapt, and rearticulate meanings across cultural contexts (Yoon, 2023). Within this framework, influential actors in the comment network function not only as structural hubs, but also as interpretative reference points that mediate shared understandings of Korean drama content.

Words that frequently appear

Figure 7 shows that the word cloud of the comment section of the Netflix K-Content YouTube video 'Queen of Tears Cast Reveals Secrets to Each Other | Office Hours | Netflix' shows that 'Kim' and 'Jiwon' are the most frequently mentioned words. Table 6 presents the data on the words and their frequencies in the comment section.

Table 6 further indicates that the word cloud analysis of the Netflix K-Content YouTube video 'Queen of Tears Cast Reveals Secrets to Each Other | Office Hours | Netflix' highlights the most frequently mentioned terms in the comment section. As illustrated in Figure 7, the names 'Kim' (152 times), 'Jiwon' (81 times), and 'Soohyun' (49 times) dominate, followed by emotionally expressive words such as 'love' (80 times), 'drama' (69 times), 'queen' (39 times), and 'tears' (38 times). These results indicate that fan discussions revolve primarily around the lead actors and the drama's title, signalling a strongly celebrity-driven pattern of audience engagement. From a promotional perspective, such celebrity-centred discourse reflects how Korean dramas function as cultural marketing media, where fan-generated interactions sustain visibility and audience attachment over time (Choi & Kessler, 2025;Rafdinal et al., 2025).

Figure 7. Word cloud of Netflix YouTube channel Video Network K-Content 'Queen of Tears' cast reveals secrets to each other | Office Hours | Netflix'
Source: Word Cloud (2025)

Table 6. Netflix K-Content YouTube Comments The cast of 'Queen of Tears' reveal each other's secrets | Working Hours | Netflix'

No.	Word	Frequency
1	Kim	152
2	Jiwon	81
3	Love	80
4	Drama	69
5	Soohyun	49
6	Really	43
7	queen	39
8	good	38
9	tears	38
10	please	36

Source: Word Clouds,(2025)

The prominence of personal names reflects a celebrity-centred discourse, suggesting that fan conversations focus less on narrative themes and more on the actors' star appeal. This aligns with Maulidya & Hidayat (2023), who found that Indonesian Korean drama audiences often attach emotional significance to the actors themselves rather than exclusively to the storyline. Likewise, the frequent use of emotionally charged words such as 'love', 'really', and 'good' demonstrates fans' high affective investment, a phenomenon that Burgess & Green (2009) identify as central to participatory culture on YouTube. Such emotionally expressive discourse aligns with Zhang (2025), an argument that YouTube facilitates cross-cultural audience reception, enabling viewers from different cultural contexts to negotiate meanings and express affective attachment to foreign media content. Similar patterns of audience interpretation in YouTube comment discourse on Korean dramas have also been identified by Putri & Purwadi (2025), who emphasise that fans actively construct meanings through digital commentary rather than passively consuming media content.

From a promotional perspective, the repetition of actors' names underscores the effectiveness of marketing strategies in amplifying the visibility of the drama's stars. As Jin (2024) observes, the New Korean Wave strategically leverages digital platforms to strengthen star power, with online fan networks actively reproducing and circulating promotional discourse. In this context, the recurrence of celebrity names in fan comments illustrates how fans themselves act as promotional agents, reinforcing visibility and sustaining audience enthusiasm. While previous studies have predominantly examined promotional strategies from the perspective of

industry-driven marketing or platform governance, this study extends the discussion by demonstrating how promotional visibility is co-produced at the micro-level through everyday fan interactions in comment networks. This finding also resonates with Rospitasari (2021) , who identifies YouTube as an alternative medium for digital activism within the creative industries. Similarly, YouTube serves as an alternative participatory space for fandoms, enabling fans not only to consume but also to co-create and amplify promotional discourse around cultural products.

Overall, the word cloud findings reveal that fan engagement with *Queen of Tears* is shaped by both celebrity appeal and emotional expression. These elements not only illustrate the devotion of digital fandoms but also highlight how participatory practices on platforms such as YouTube contribute to the effectiveness of promotional strategies for cultural products. This is consistent with the findings of Maulina et al., (2024) , who emphasise that female Korean culture fans build subcultures rooted in pleasure, creativity, and sisterhood. By integrating word cloud analysis with social network indicators, this article offers a nuanced contribution to fandom studies by linking affective expression, celebrity discourse, and network structure within a single analytical framework—an aspect that remains underexplored in existing research. In this way, the repeated mentions of actors' names and emotional keywords in YouTube comments not only amplify promotional visibility but also foster a sense of solidarity and collective identity within the fandom.

While the findings highlight the affective, participatory, and promotional dimensions of fan engagement, it is important to note that such involvement does not necessarily translate into behavioural imitation. The emotionally expressive language observed in the comment sections reflects interpretative and affective engagement rather than direct enactment of behaviours portrayed in the drama. This observation aligns with audience reception research on Korean dramas, which suggests that emotional and interpretative involvement does not automatically translate into behavioural imitation (Toruan et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study identified two communication network patterns in the Netflix K-Content YouTube video 'Queen of Tears Cast Reveals Secrets to Each Other | Office Hours | Netflix': wheel and chain patterns. The network is dominated by wheel structures, with @fourleafclover-ww1mm emerging as the most central actor based on degree and eigenvector centrality values. Although overall network connectivity is low (graph density = 0.000), the modularity score (0.64) indicates the formation of distinct sub-communities. The word cloud analysis further shows that fan discussions are primarily celebrity-driven, centring on Kim Jiwon and Kim Soohyun, alongside emotionally expressive terms such as 'love' and 'drama'. Theoretically, these findings enrich fan network theory and digital media studies by demonstrating how YouTube operates as a hybrid participatory–broadcast communication platform, in which interaction is open but visibility clusters around central actors. The study highlights the promotional value of fan engagement, showing how celebrity-focused discussions can amplify star visibility and sustain audience enthusiasm. Although limited to a single case, this study suggests the potential effectiveness of YouTube in fostering participatory fan communities and supporting promotional strategies for Korean dramas.

Future research could adopt a comparative network approach by analysing multiple Korean drama content promotional videos across different platforms, such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, to examine whether similar centralisation patterns persist. Longitudinal designs could also be employed to track shifts in actor centrality and emotional discourse over time, particularly before and after major promotional events. In addition, integrating in-depth interviews or digital ethnography with fans would allow researchers to explore how audiences consciously interpret, negotiate, and reproduce celebrity-centred promotional discourse.

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