

Abstract

Jack's Fan Club: A Case study of Jack Methus Trirattanawareesin in Reality Show Academy Fantasia, Jack AF4

Fan and fan club has long been familiar words and commonly used for defining a person and a group of people who admire somebody or something very much. In the past few years, fan and fan club has become significant phenomenon in society together with the rise of the reality show, True Academy Fantasia. Being a fan is not just an individual's feeling of adoring someone but means of social relations among others. Fan club has become interestingly well organised and developed to a kind of subculture, which has an interesting social networking.

This research aims to explore the formation of fan club and define relationship between the members in terms of networking. It examines the construction and practices of the fan club of Jack Methus Trirattawareesin, a candidate in reality show: Tue Academy Fantasia Season 4 or Jack AF4. The paper will look at the process of becoming fans, effective factors that lead people to be fans, and the means of communication and social networking among members as these cases demonstrate the identification of the relationship between Jack's fans.

The theoretical framework of this research is based on Abercrombie and Longhurst's concept of fan and fandom. According to Abercrombie and Longhurst, fandom can be defined as three continuum levels: Fan, Cult or Subculture, and Enthusiasm.

Considering the formation of Jack's fan club, the groups' practices, and its networking, the relationship of Jack's fans can be characterised into three groups. These are Beginning (Weak) level, Intermediate (Strong) level , High (Intense) level.

The Beginning level is individual admirers and extremely rely on mass media for information consumption. They have no direct connection among each other. This group is similar to Abercrombie and Longhurst's Fan.

The Intermediate level is a group of people that is well organised and call themselves as 'JMC'. The group gather as a small community that has strong network. Website, high speed internet, and high technological gadget such as multimedia mobile phone are effective means of communication and they are significant to the formation of the group. The Intermediate is similar to Abercrombie and longhurst's 'Cult or Subculture' in terms of selection of media usage. They still search out for jack's information on media but the specific channel such as personal website www.jackmethusclub.com and Jack's webboard at www.pantip.com are the most in use. Apart from the use of communicative technology, the significant factor in forming strong network is well arrangement of the organisation. The group has clear position among members and there are some members act as leaders of the group.

The last level is the Intense level. This group of people has passion and admire Jack in the great extent. The members of the group have direct personal connection between themselves. Though they use website such as 'Baan Look Mhee', the webboard at www.pantip.com as a space for their community, the common ways of communication and networking is more personal such as telephone, MSN, and group meeting. This group can be seen similar to Abercrombie and Longhurst's Enthusiasm in terms of light media user, but it differs from Enthusiasm in the use of specialised media. There is no such a particular media or literature produced for the group, but the exclusive information that the members of the group have and circulate among themselves is from personal relationship between the members and people working with Jack or Jack's family.

The study of Jack's fan club shows the relationship and the formation of fan club, from the individual level to the group or subculture. It demonstrates how network plays significant role in constructing fan club as a community unit in the society.