

CPPL100 Final Paper
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Myself as a Leader Today

We live in a world where we're faced with a multitude of issues every day. Some are more serious than others, but all are equally problems in our societies. While the issue I'll be exploring isn't as impactful as something like Covid-19, which was my first thought to write about, it's something I have more of a personal connection to. In this paper, I will explore the implications of "cancel culture," specifically in the Korean music market and fan community. The leader whom I look up to is one who has actually been "cancelled," Bang Chan of the Korean music group Stray Kids. However, he inspires me with his sincere and empathetic messages to fans and with his down to earth and humble nature.

"Cancel culture" describes the practices and mindsets of any collective group of people who "cancel" a celebrity or someone influential, which is to essentially ostracize them and push them out of the public eye, no longer giving them attention or money. This culture is most prominent on "stan Twitter," a term which refers to the aggregate of users on social media app Twitter who post content and have discourse about celebrities, music, and popular media. In most cases, cancelling someone is an appropriate reaction to any sort of offensive or otherwise harmful things they have done or said. Recently, author J.K. Rowling was cancelled for a tweet which fans thought to be transphobic. It's important to hold celebrities and influential people accountable, but sometimes cancel culture goes too far. People can be cancelled for something questionable that they said 10 years ago, even if their beliefs and behaviors have changed. The place where I personally see the most cancellations going on is in the Kpop fan community. Kpop fans have a reputation for being persistent and powerful, and they will stop at nothing to cancel someone. Unfortunately, most Kpop idols being cancelled don't deserve it. In January,

Chen of the internationally popular group EXO was cancelled when he announced that not only did he have a fiancée, but that she was pregnant and due in April. This news exploded on the Internet, with most fans being happy for him, but a very vocal minority felt betrayed. The singer was labelled as irresponsible and selfish for having a child out of wedlock, especially before he had fulfilled his compulsory military duties as a male Korean citizen. Fans even wanted to have him kicked out of the group, and were angry when no actions were taken to do so. I believe cancel culture itself isn't the problem, as it can often expose and rightfully exclude people with values that we as a society shouldn't support. The problem is when people take it too far, cancelling people for insignificant reasons or mistakes.

Someone I look up to as a leader is Korean-Australian singer-songwriter Christopher Bang, known by his stage name Bang Chan. He is a member, producer, and is the leader of the Korean music group Stray Kids. He himself has been cancelled for various reasons, most notably a cultural appropriation scandal in which he wore his hair in cornrows for a performance. Fans aren't sure about whether he himself asked for that hairstyle or if it's just something his stylists gave him. Kpop idols famously have very little control over their appearance, everything is regulated very strictly by their companies. Despite this incident, I still believe him to be a good person and role model. He speaks sincerely with fans on his weekly livestreams, which are known for being casual and calming. He has offered advice on dealing with stress, anxiety, and other mental health issues, one of very few "human" idols in an industry where each person is meant to be a perfect package of vocals and dancing. Bang Chan follows the self-leadership/empowerment model of leadership, in which "responsibility [is] delegated downward." (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001, p. 408). Bang Chan delegates responsibility to his followers to be kind to themselves and to others on the Internet, telling them that he's always

watching what they're posting. The last thing any Stray Kids fan wants to do is disappoint him, and I like to think that's one of the reasons why Stray Kids' fans are known for just being chaotically funny, not overly aggressive like other fan groups unfortunately seem to be.

In my eventual career, all I want is to be a leader who is humble and empathetic, just as Bang Chan is. He builds connections with his followers, and I want to do the same. I want to encourage "self leadership" and empowerment within my followers. While I don't plan on ever becoming a celebrity or influencer, we can all do our parts to combat the negative sides of cancel culture. I value information and research a lot, and I want to encourage those I lead to form their own opinions and do their own research. Overall, I hope I can become someone that others look to for guidance and encouragement.

Works Cited

Marion, R., & Uhl-Bien, M. (2001). Leadership in Complex Organizations. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 12, 389-418. Retrieved December 15, 2020.