

ABSTRACT

In the intriguing landscape of Aespa's universe as the pioneer of virtual concepts in the K-Pop industry, May 2023 marked a pivotal juncture for Aespa, their highly anticipated comeback album, "My World," unveiled a transformative shift in the group's conceptual trajectory into a "real world" concept. This research explores how shifts in the concept affect the behavior and identity of their fans. The study contributes to filling the gap in celebrity or fan studies regarding theoretical insights and its practical applications. Through virtual ethnography and in-depth interviews with selected Aespa fans, the study found that this conceptual shift resulted in significant changes in fan behavior and identity. Fans exhibited increased interactivity for their behavior and deepened their fans' identification to the new concept, though opinions about the change varied. Data analysis revealed that this concept shift led to new dynamics in fan engagement and strengthened their bond within the fandom community.

Keywords: Fans Behavior, Fans Identity, Aespa, Concept Shift, Weverse