

# Redesigning Families: How Korean Youth Rewire Sociability Through Platforms and Interfaces

- **How do young Koreans mobilize digital platforms to create modes of sociability increasingly absent from traditional family structures?**
- **How do platform interfaces and specific UX/UI design choices shape these new intimacies and relationship types?**
- **In what ways do users actively appropriate, repurpose, or subvert these platforms—beyond their intended design—to construct alternative forms of intimacy and belonging?**

# Starting points



## Index relationship

현대인의 인간관계는 단순히 ‘친하다, 안 친하다’의 이분법으로 나누지 않고, 활씬 복잡하게 구성되어 있어요.  
타인과의 관계에 색인을 붙여 전략적으로 관리하는 현대인의 관계 맺기 방식을 ‘인덱스 관계’라고 해요.



선망하는  
‘인친’

최신 소식을 알려주는  
‘폐친’

함께 덕질하는  
‘트친’

동네에서 만나는  
‘실친’

### How do you usually express emotions there? (tone, emojis, emoticons, etc.)

- Respondent 1: Tone of speech
- Respondent 2: Tone of speech, emoticons
- Respondent 3: Emoticons, special characters
- Respondent 4: Tone of speech, emoticons
- Respondent 5: Tone of speech
- Respondent 6: I frequently use emojis and emoticons
- Respondent 7: I think I use a somewhat gentler tone
- Respondent 8: I use memes with players' faces or mainly use formal language since strangers from real life gather there
- Respondent 9: Emoticons
- Respondent 10: I'm naturally rich in emoticons, so I used emoticons a lot
- Respondent 11: I use things like (ಠ\_ಠ) a lot
- Respondent 12: I use thumbs up emoticons or facial expression emoticons
- Respondent 13: Formal language

### Do you feel that the current traditional family structure meets your emotional needs? If not, how do online communities supplement them?

- Respondent 1: I can share some concerns with certain people that I couldn't share with family
- Respondent 2: I feel that traditional family relationships satisfy my needs. However, online communities seem to supplement the interest and humor that I can't feel from family
- Respondent 3: Well, I'm not sure, but I think communities can mutually fill what families can't provide
- Respondent 4: Comfort
- Respondent 5: Yes. Haven't particularly felt anything online
- Respondent 6: I don't tend to share emotions much with anyone around me, whether family or others, so I don't really pay attention to it
- Respondent 8: I think it's sufficiently fulfilling
- Respondent 9: Yes yes
- Respondent 11: Being with family feels warm and stable, but sometimes it's difficult to share all the stories or interests I want to. In such cases, I get comfort by talking with people who have similar thoughts in online communities
- Respondent 12: If there's something lacking, online communities respect and understand my preferences

### Please share any memorable 'emotional moments' from these spaces (e.g., being comforted by someone, feeling moved by empathy, etc.)

- Respondent 1: None yet
- Respondent 2: I had an experience of getting nostalgic when atmospheres, people, or places that reminded me of old memories appeared
- Respondent 3: I don't think there were any particularly
- Respondent 4: I was moved by touching messages
- Respondent 5: None
- Respondent 6: I comfort friends every week
- Respondent 7: I was able to get motivated by seeing various people's motivational messages
- Respondent 8: Most recently, when a player who hadn't been performing well hit a grand slam, I felt warmth in my heart as we all celebrated together
- Respondent 9: Reminiscing about memories
- Respondent 10: It's been a while so I can't remember clearly, but I think I received appropriate comfort while sharing concerns with people during group voice calls
- Respondent 11: I think being congratulated on my birthday is memorable
- Respondent 12: I felt it when a friend I knew comforted me

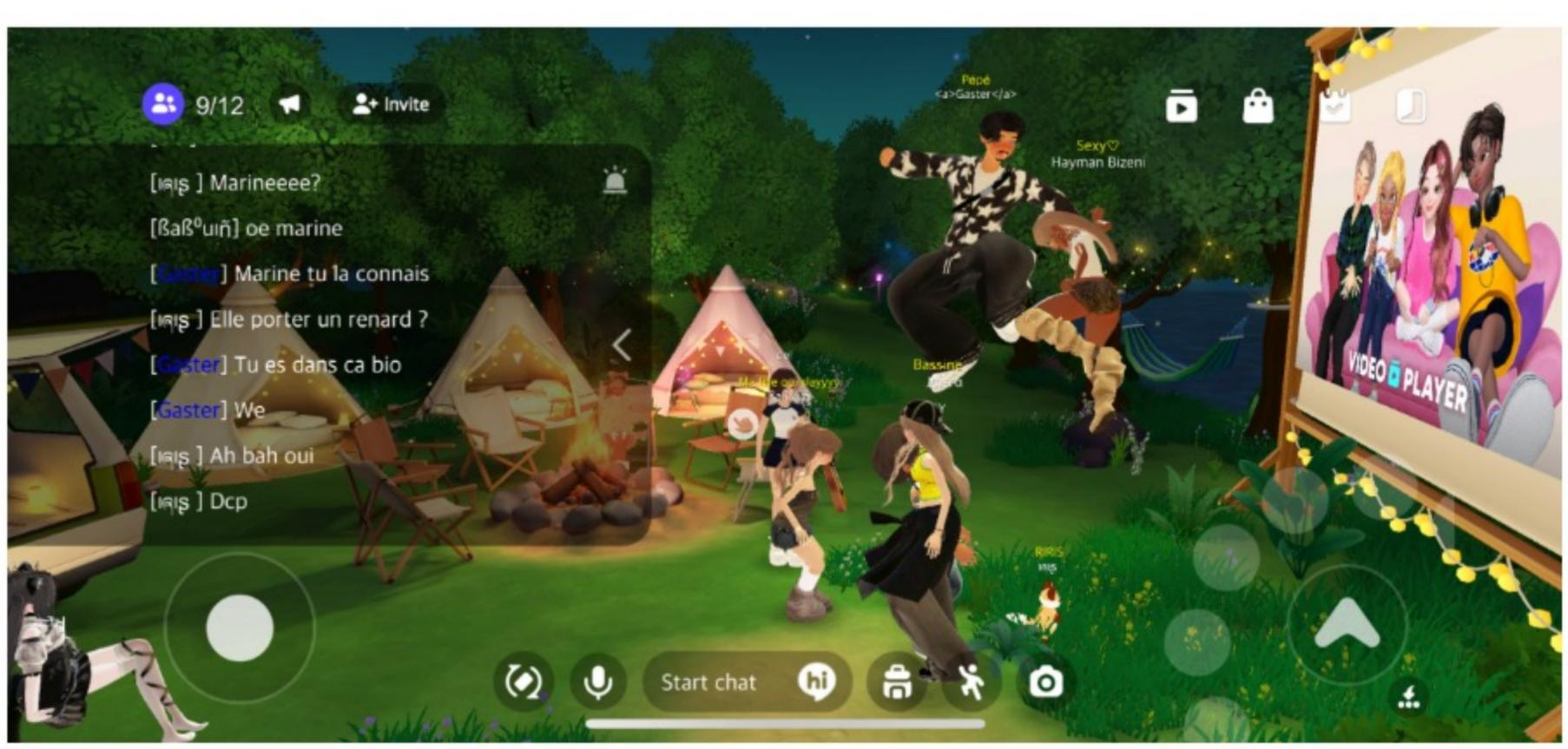
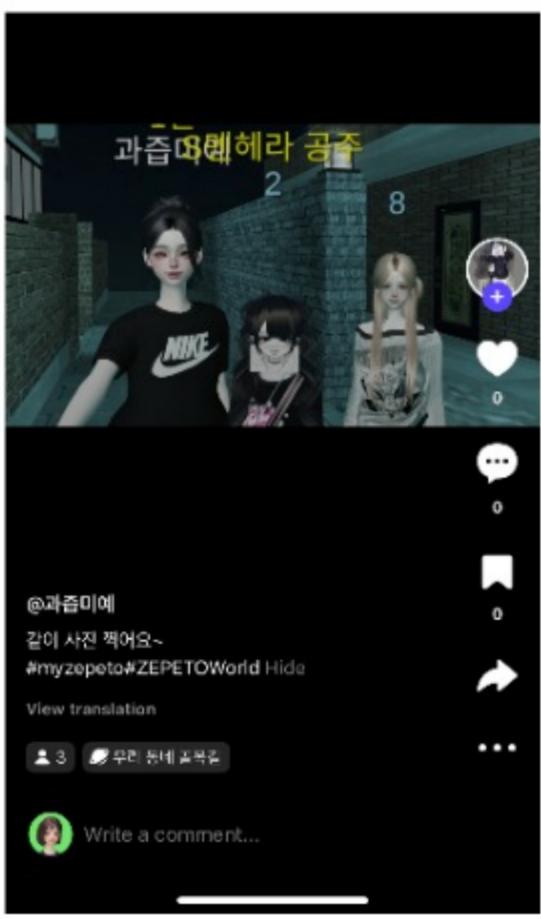
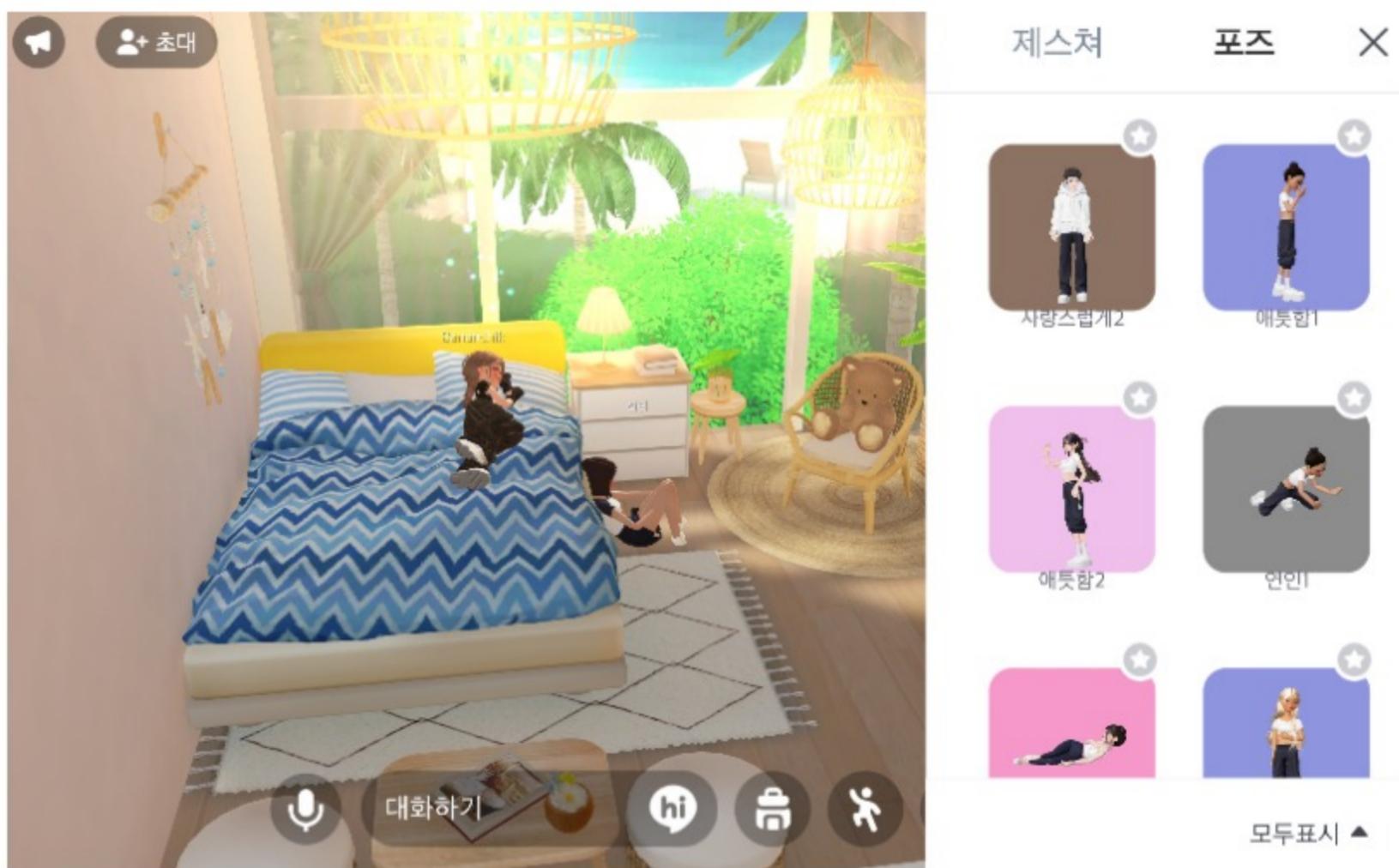
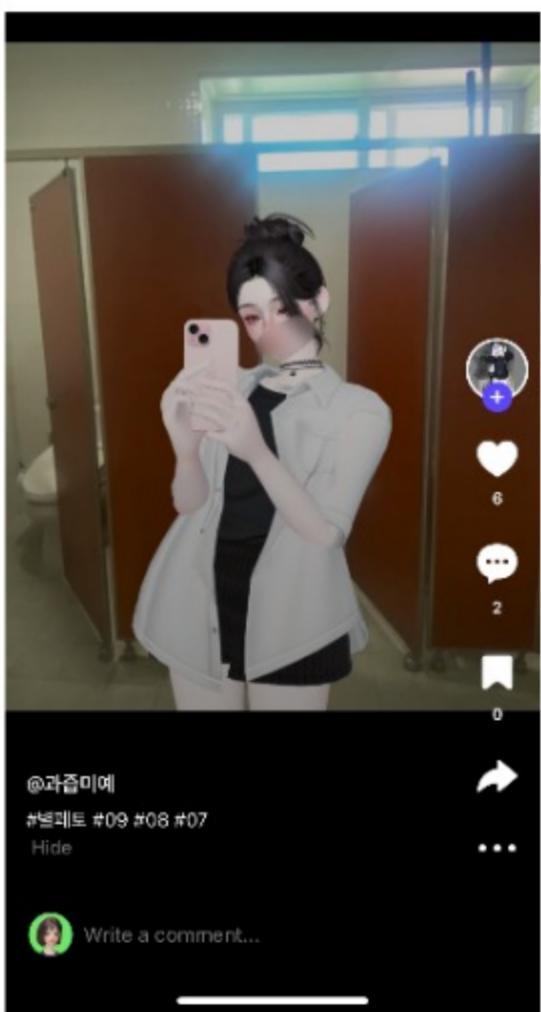
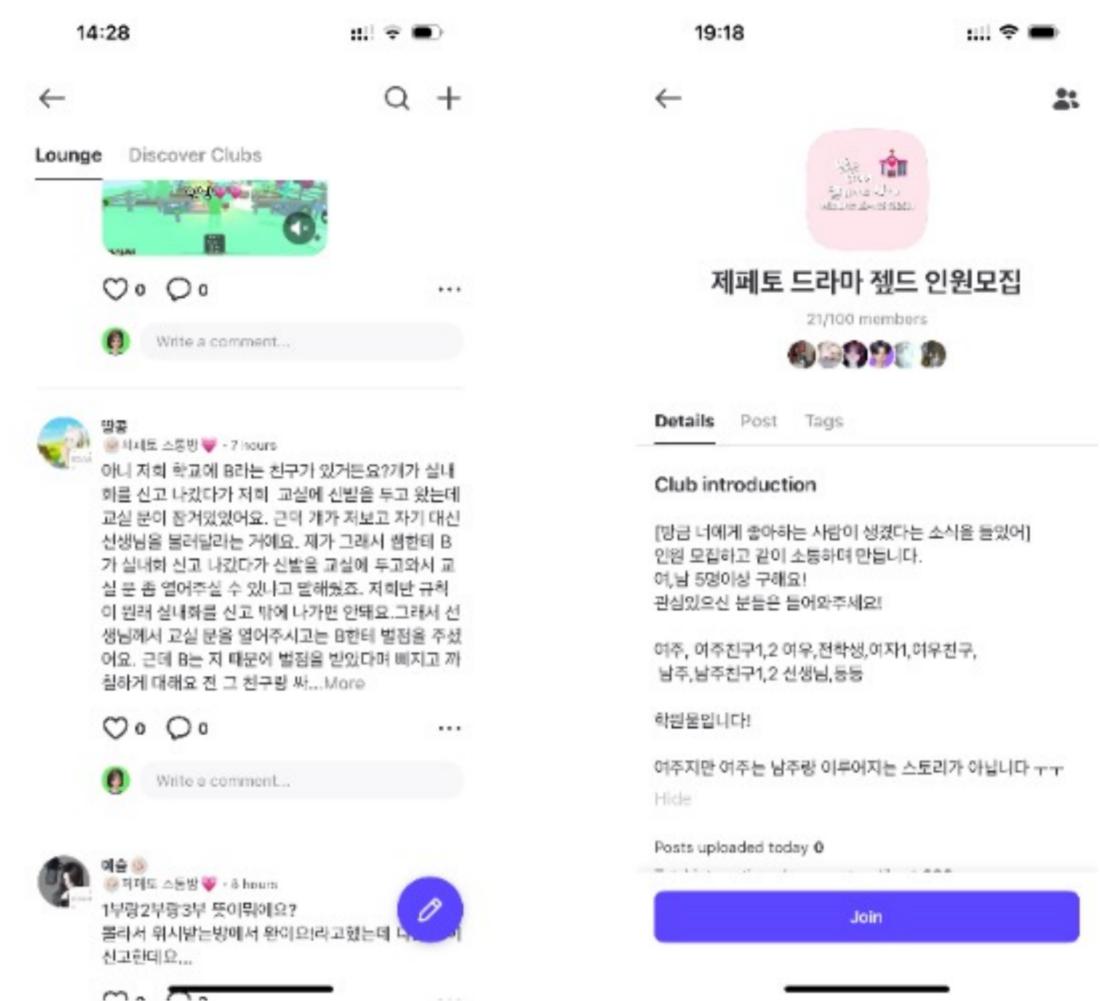
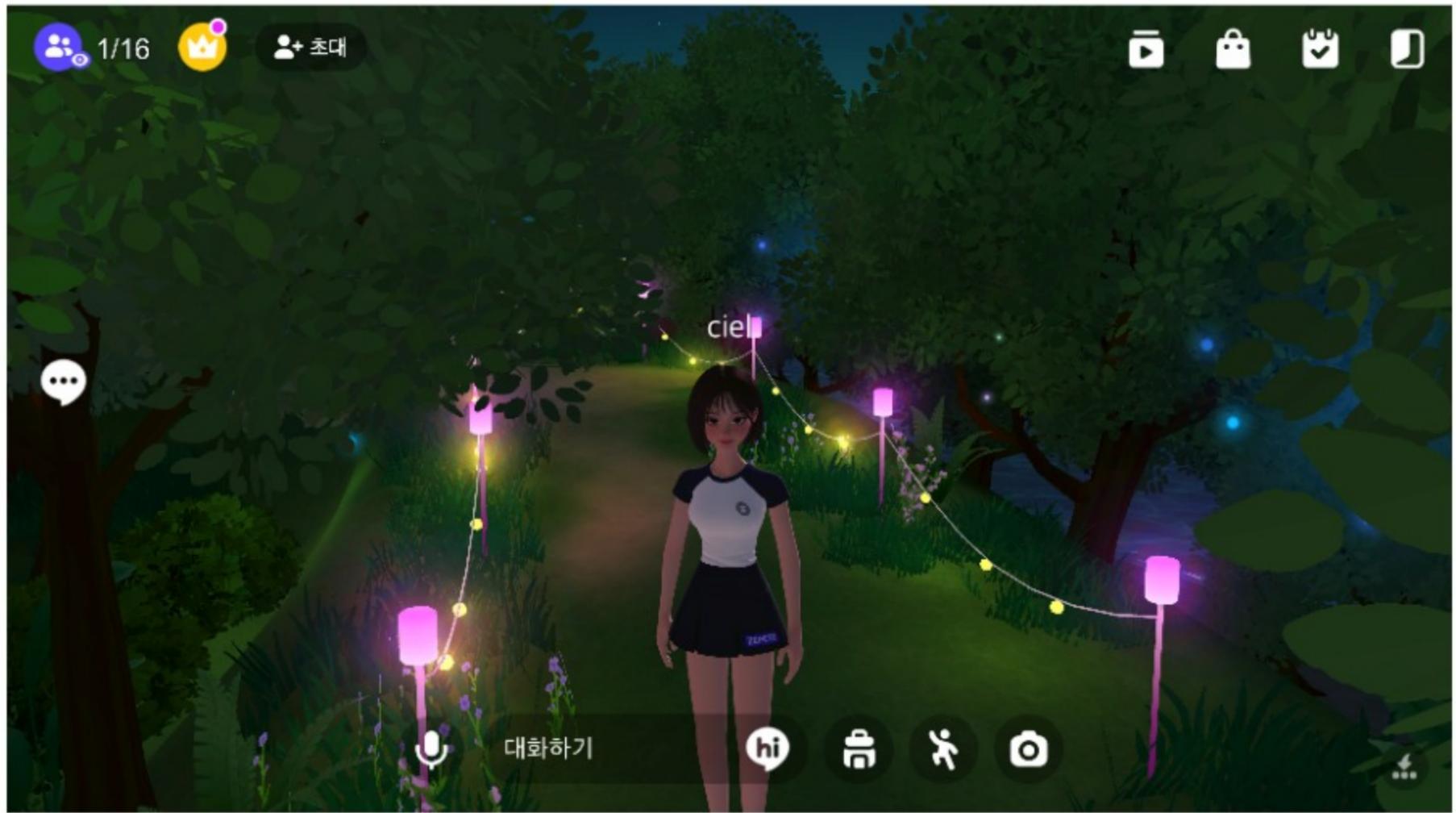
### If you have felt a sense of belonging in an online community, in what situation was it?

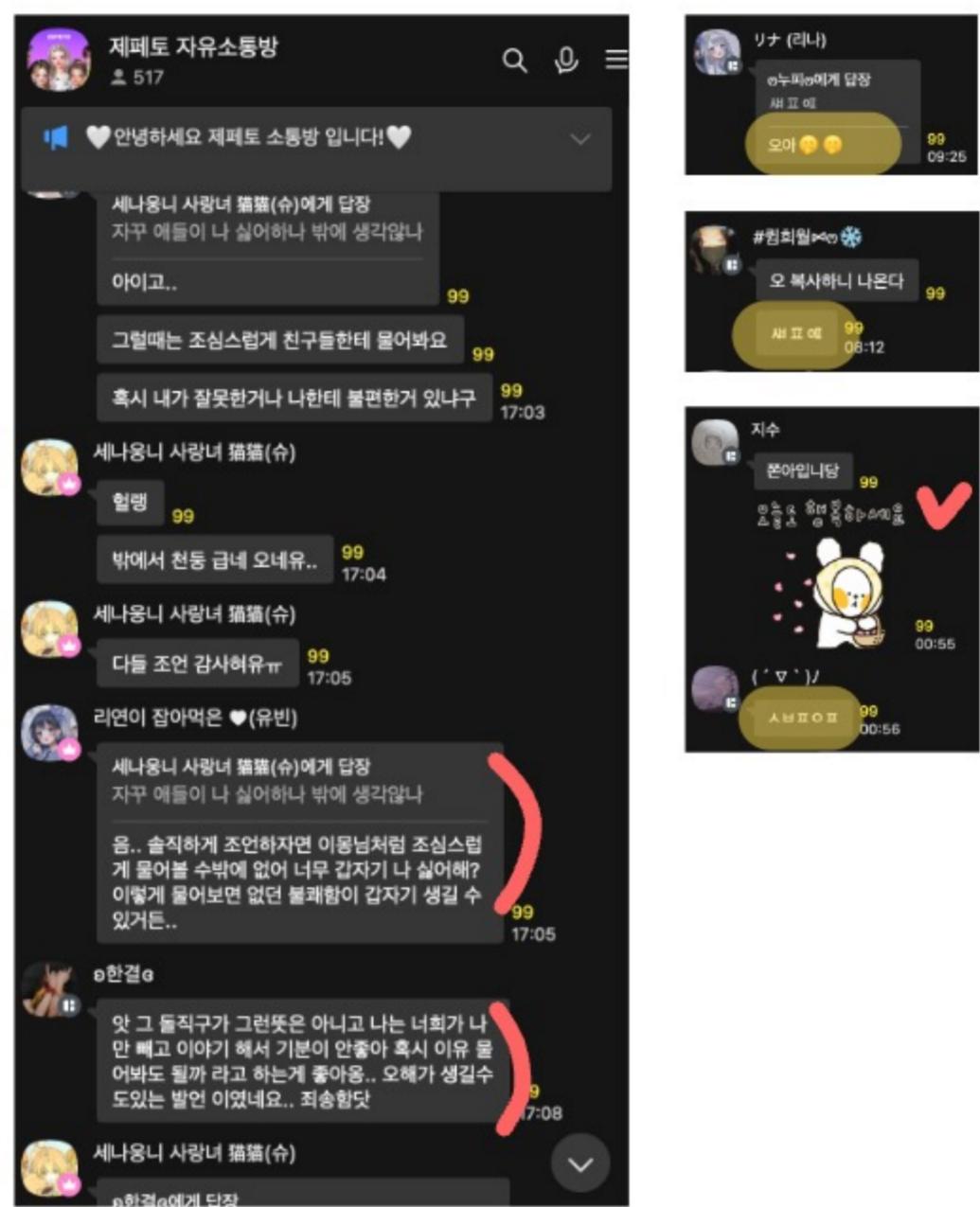
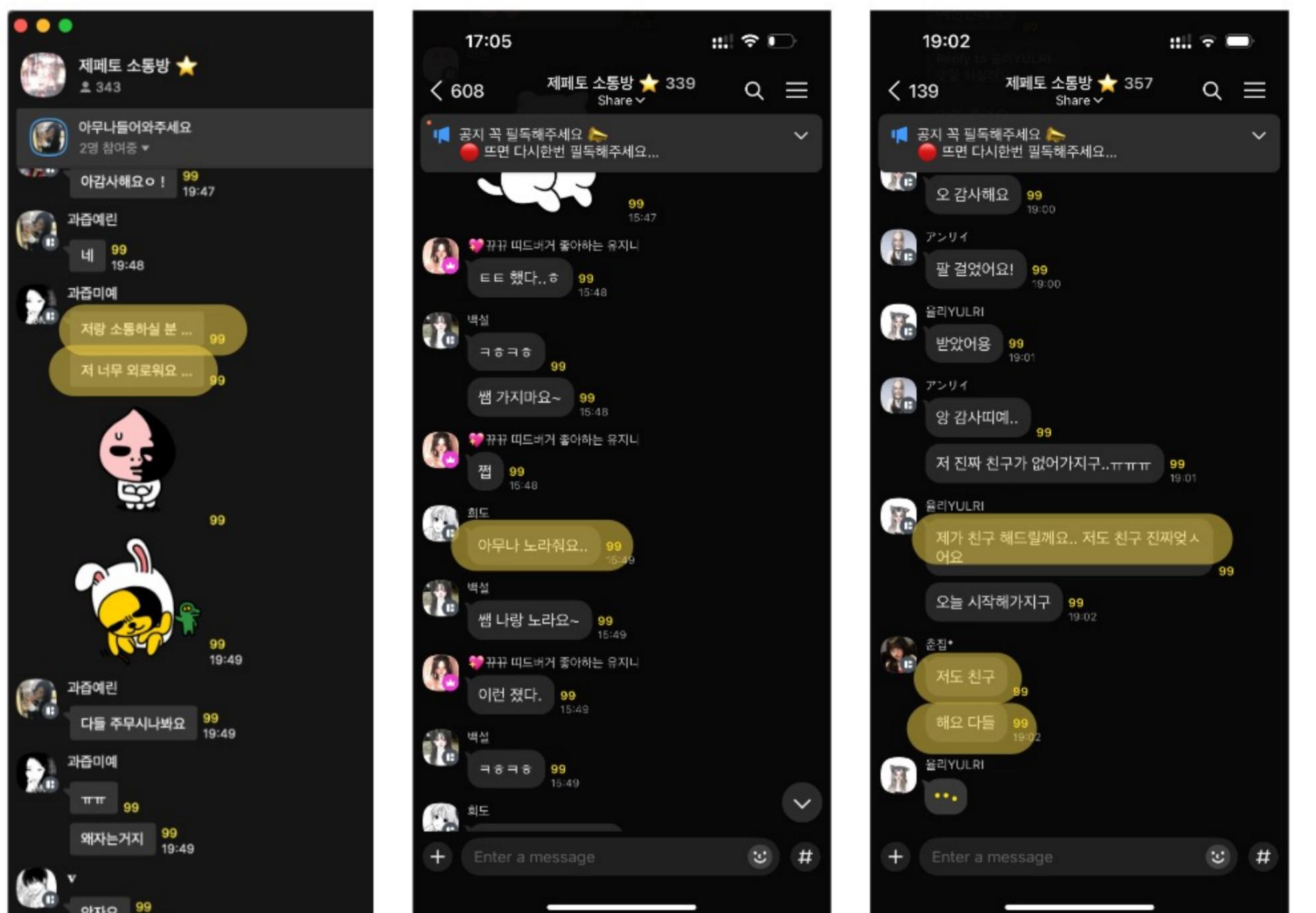
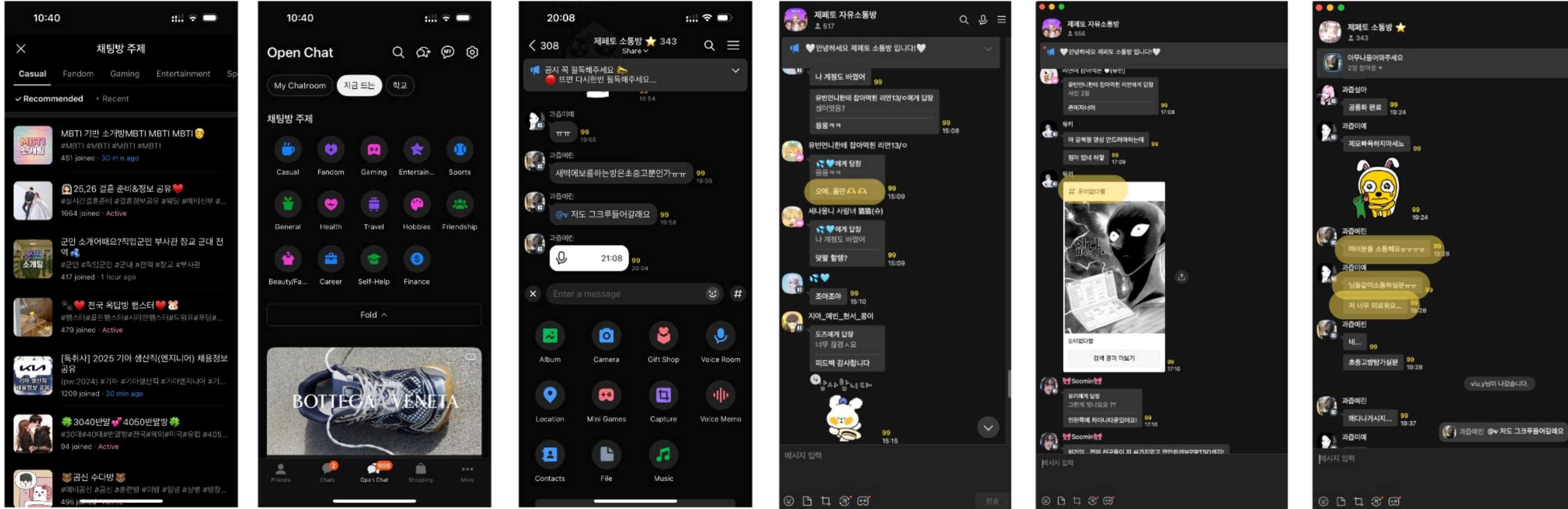
- Respondent 1: When joining a new community and being welcomed warmly
- Respondent 2: When posts about my favorite singer were uploaded, I felt a sense of belonging as a fan while empathizing with the posts
- Respondent 3: When I was selected as a scholarship recipient and was in the same chat room with other scholarship students
- Respondent 5: Bond with friends
- Respondent 6: I seem to feel a sense of belonging only with acquaintances, never felt it with strangers
- Respondent 7: When a group chat with friends was created
- Respondent 8: I feel a sense of belonging knowing that we're watching the same situation and thinking the same thoughts during every game
- Respondent 9: Comment interactions
- Respondent 10: I think you feel a sense of belonging after a few months when you actively participate in open chats, when you feel like you've become close
- Respondent 11: Hmm.. I don't think there was any ㅜㅜ
- Respondent 12: I felt it when we gathered in voice chat rooms to talk or when we discussed topics together

**UX/UI features (emojis, memes, chat, voice calls) → tools for intimacy.**

**Limits of the family → supplemented by online communities through shared emotions/interests.**

**Mechanism of belonging → (1) repetition of everyday interactions + (2) collective emotional experiences.**





**人曰포오판(삼백풀읽포):**  
I give up reading because there are too many messages on SNS. (More than 300 kakaoTalk messages)

# Limits of Family

**How do young Koreans mobilize digital platforms to create modes of sociability increasingly absent from traditional family structures?**

**Emotional Constraints**

**Supplemented by Online Com**

**Lack of Shared Interests**

- I can share some concerns with certain people that I couldn't share with family
- However, online communities seem to supplement the interest and humor that I can't feel from family
- Being with family feels warm and stable, but sometimes it's difficult to share all the stories or interests I want to. In such cases, I get comfort by talking with people who have similar thoughts in online communities
- online communities respect and understand my preferences

# Platform Design

**How do platform interfaces and specific UX/UI design choices shape these new intimacies and relationship types?**

**Shared Presence**

**Emotional Expression Tools**

**Group Formation**

- I frequently use emojis and emoticons
- I use memes/special characters/gentler tone
- When a group chat with friends was created
- I received appropriate comfort while sharing concerns with people during group voice calls
- I felt it when we gathered in voice chat rooms to talk or when we discussed topics together

# User Appropriation

**In what ways do users actively appropriate, repurpose, or subvert these platforms beyond their intended design to construct alternative forms of intimacy and belonging?**

## Emotional Care Hubs

## Collaborative Creative Communities

- Originally designed for hobbies, networking, or study groups, but repurposed as anonymous counseling spaces where users share personal concerns and provide mutual comfort.
- Instead of just customizing avatars or playing casually, users recruit peers to *co-produce dramas and roleplays*, transforming the platform into a stage for collective storytelling and creation.

# 2D(Kakaotalk) vs 3D(Zepeto)

Aspect	KakaoTalk (2D)	Zepeto (3D)
<b>Mode of Expression</b>	Text, emojis, memes, special characters → symbolic/emotional language	Avatars, gestures, outfits, virtual spaces → embodied/performance-based expression
<b>Interaction Structure</b>	Chat windows, sequential messages, records remain → asynchronous possible	Shared spaces, real-time co-presence, collective gatherings → synchronous required
<b>Type of Intimacy</b>	Conversational intimacy: comfort, private concerns, everyday check-ins	Spatial intimacy: co-presence, play, collaborative activities (ex. drama production)

# References

