

A Cross-Sectional Study on the Effects of K-Pop Idolisation towards Academic Performance, Socioeconomics, and Perception in University Students in Klang Valley, Malaysia

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Abstract

Introduction: Over the past few years, the global popularity of K-Pop has grown significantly, attracting millions of fans and impacting various dimension of life. **Objectives:** This study aimed to study the effect of K- Pop idolisation towards academic performance, socioeconomic status, and perception among university students in Klang Valley, Malaysia. **Methodologies:** A cross- sectional study was conducted over 18 weeks using stratified random sampling and a validated self-administered questionnaire was distributed via social media. The questionnaire covered sociodemographic characteristics, K-Pop idolisation levels, socioeconomic status, and perception on the effects of K-Pop idolisation. Data were analysed with JASP 0.17 software using chi-square tests to determine association between K-Pop idolisation level and academic performance, K-Pop idolisation level and socioeconomic status, their perception towards the effects of K-Pop idolisation, and association between gender and academic performance, socioeconomic status, and perception. P-value of less than 0.05 considered statistically significant. **Results:** Among 315 respondents, 71.11% were female, and 28.89% were male. K-Pop idolisation levels revealed 77.0% were casual/avid fans, while 23.0% were die- hard/superfans. Academic performance showed 50.16% were in the second class lower, with only 4.76% in the first class. Regarding socioeconomic status, 86.03% had low socioeconomic status, and 13.97% had high socioeconomic status. There was a statistically significant association between K-Pop idolisation and socioeconomic status ($P < 0.001$) and between K-Pop idolisation and perceptions of its effects ($P < 0.05$). However, no significant association was found between K-Pop idolisation levels and academic performance ($P = 0.111$), or between gender and academic performance, socioeconomic status, and perception ($P = 0.486$, $P = 0.799$, $P = 0.840$, respectively). **Conclusion:** Hopefully this research provides valuable insights into the effects of K- Pop idolisation on students, aiding educators, parents, and policymakers in understanding and addressing its impact.

Keywords: K-Pop idolisation, academic performance, socioeconomic, perception

DECLARATION

We hereby declare that this research report is the result of our own research investigations, except where otherwise stated. We do not have any conflict of interest with the content of this research study. We also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other faculty or institutions.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, we sincerely thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. Al-Abed Ali Ahmed Al- Abed, our supervisor, for his continuous encouragement, guidance, and invaluable insights throughout this study. His expertise and support have been essential in shaping this research and making our research project possible. We also wish to express our deep gratitude to Maj. Gen. Prof. Dato' Dr. Mohd Zin Bidin, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Cyberjaya, for his vision, support, and belief in the significance of this study. Special thanks go to our team members, Iqbal, Ain, Nayli, Sasmitha, and Amirrah, for their collaborative efforts in completing this research. Their dedication and hard work have been the backbone of this project. We are also sincerely appreciative of the University of Cyberjaya and its Faculty of Medicine staff for providing us the opportunity to learn and understand Research Evidence Based Medicine, and the necessary resources for this research. This achievement would not have been possible without their assistance. Our heartfelt thanks go to all the respondents who participated in our survey. This research would not have been possible without your generous contributions of time and experiences. Your willingness to participate has been crucial. Finally, we thank our friends and family for their unwavering understanding and support. Their patience and encouragement have given us the strength and motivation to persevere. We are truly grateful to everyone.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In recent years, the global phenomenon of K-Pop (Korean Pop) has transcended cultural boundaries, captivating millions of fans worldwide. The rise phenomenon of South Korean popular culture is called hallyu, “The Korean Wave” (Sari, 2018). K-pop is typically performed by highly stylized boy bands and girl groups, and has garnered a massive international following (Adriani, 2021). The Klang Valley, a major urban region in Malaysia, is no exception to this trend. The allure of K-Pop idols has significantly influenced various aspects of the lives of university students in this region. K-dramas, K-music, and K-culture are building a stronghold in the country with the younger generation becoming more fascinated towards South Korea’s cultural images (Hidayah et al., 2020). This research aims to explore the multifaceted effects of K-Pop idolisation on academic performance, socioeconomic status, and perceptions among university students in Klang Valley.

Idolisation, in the context of K-Pop, refers to the intense admiration and emulation of K-Pop idols by their fans. This phenomenon often involves consuming vast amounts of media content related to idols, participating actively in fan communities, and adopting the lifestyles, fashion, and behaviours of idols. According to Fuschillo (2020), idolisation is highlighted as an intense emotional commitment to a particular value. Chung et al. (2008) further explains that idolisation in K-Pop culture is described as a profound devotion or strong loyalty to an object or idea. K-pop enthusiasts, often referred to as "K-poppers," span a diverse demographic range, including both young people and the elderly.

Previous studies have suggested a strong correlation between high levels of celebrity worship and a decline in quality of life. A cross-sectional study done by J Carbonell et al. (2017) showed that there is a significant relationship between the addiction towards K-drama and academic performance. Contrary to this, current phenomena indicate that young K-pop fans may experience several beneficial impacts from their fandom. For instance, research conducted by Salsabela et al. (2022) found no significant relationship between wisdom and the idolisation exhibited by K-Pop fans. This suggests that K-pop fandom does not necessarily impede one's ability to make wise decisions.

The economic implications of idol culture are also notable. Trends related to South Korea are growing quickly in a short amount of time, dominating more consumption of Korean goods (Khalid & Wok, 2020). Fan practices often involve significant financial expenditure on merchandise, concert tickets, and other related activities. A positive and significant relationship between the Korean Wave and attitude toward Korean products among foreign consumers who are familiar with Korean culture are likely to have a more positive attitude toward Korean products and have more intention to purchase them (Ing et al., 2018). Study by Sang Hyeop Lee (2017) among Malaysian university students revealed that economic status significantly affects perceptions of the Korean wave. All six respondents expressed a willingness to spend money on Korean products, particularly cosmetics and fashion brands, indicating a substantial influence of K-pop culture on consumer behavior. Previous researchers claimed that the adoption of the Korean Wave can directly influence the purchase of Korean products (Yu, 2012). Lee (2020) explores how the consumer habits of K-Pop fans can impact their financial well-being. The study found that dedicated fans often allocate a considerable portion of their disposable income to support their idols, which may affect their overall socioeconomic status. Additionally, Choi (2020) highlighted that the spending patterns of K-Pop fans can lead to financial strain, especially among young adults who may not have stable income sources. This study will examine whether these spending habits influenced by idolisation affect students'

financial well-being in Klang Valley.

The role of idols in shaping fans' perceptions and self-identity is well-documented. K-Pop fans have been known to self-categorize by creating, joining and maintaining various online K-Pop fan groups (Kim & Kim, 2017). Individuals also report a variety of positive psychosocial outcomes such as perceiving fellow group members in a positive manner and fluctuations of self-esteem and self-enhancement, as a result of self-categorisation (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This idolisation can lead to both positive and negative outcomes. While some fans report increased motivation and personal growth, others may experience stress and dissatisfaction from trying to emulate the often-unrealistic standards set by their idols. In a related study, Zoe and Marika (2021) found that idolisation can significantly impact body image and self-esteem, especially among female fans. This research will delve into how the admiration of K-Pop idols shapes students' perceptions of themselves and their aspirations in Klang Valley.

By addressing these dimensions, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the implications of K-Pop idolisation on university students in Klang Valley. The findings will contribute to the broader discourse on cultural influence and its tangible effects on young adults in a rapidly globalizing world.

1.2 Research Objectives

1.2.1 General Objective

To determine the effect of K-Pop idolisation towards academic performance, socioeconomic status, and perception among university students in Klang Valley.

1.2.2 Specific Objective

1. To determine the association between K-Pop idolisation and academic performance among university students in Klang Valley.
2. To determine the association between K-Pop idolisation and socioeconomic status among university students in Klang Valley.
3. To determine the association between effects of K-Pop idolisation towards their perception among university students in Klang Valley.
4. To analyse the association between gender towards academic performance, socioeconomic status, and perception among university students in Klang Valley.

1.3 Justification of This Study

The objective of our research is to show that there is an association between K-pop idolisation and student's academic performance based on their GPA as the determinant. Next, to assess the effect of K-pop idolisation towards student's socioeconomic status as they intend to purchase K-pop products that are expensive willingly and to evaluate student's perception towards K-pop idolisation that gives positive or negative impact in their life.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 K-Pop Idolisation and Academic Performance

A study with the title “Kebijaksanaan dan fanatisme pada penggemar K-Pop” by Salsabela Diema Yorenagea Hayati et al. (2022) aimed to examine the correlation between wisdom and fanaticism in K-

pop fans with purposive sampling technique with which 389 subjects aged 18 to 21 years old with at least a year of experience of K-pop fans were surveyed. The result of the study has shown that there was no correlation between wisdom and fanaticism in K-pop fans ($r = -0.080$; $p > 0.05$)

In a study done by Errol Ace L. Agatep et al. (2014) analysing the effect of K-Pop towards the behavioural and academic performance of 3rd and 4th year students at Lorma Colleges Special Science High School Students had collected data through questionnaire and has found that in terms of behaviour, non-K-Pop fans are less affected in terms of social interactions and personality, whereas K-Pop fans are affected by K-Pop music. Whereas in terms of academic performance. The top three aspects of K-Pop affecting academic performance are the beat, music video, and melody.

In another cross-sectional study done by J Carbonell et al. (2017) studying K-pop sensation and academic performance of Grade 12 students at Cagayan National high school, the Chi-square test results indicate a significant relationship between K-drama addiction and academic performance, with the level of addiction affecting students' academic performance.

Another study done by Kimberlyn T. Tiu, (2013), studying the effect of background music on college student academic performance with two variables (listening to music per week and pop music genre) have shown to have significant effect on the student's academic performance. The biological sex whether the student is a male, or a female does not really matter when it relates itself to their academic performance (Kimberlyn T. Tiu, 2013).

2.2 K-Pop Idolisation and Socioeconomic Status

Recent research done by Putri Vita Nadia et al. (2022), has studied the financial literacy, lifestyle, and consumptive behaviour of K-Pop fans in the Covid-19 pandemic with religiosity as a moderating variable. The key findings of this study were that financially literate K-Pop fans tend to spend less. Financial literacy has a significant positive effect on consumption behaviour (p -value = 0.001, estimate = 1.96) where financial literacy is seen as a consumer learning process that influences purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, lifestyle significantly affects consumer behaviour (original sample = 0.809, p -value = 0.000, estimate = 1.96). A better lifestyle correlates with better consumption behaviour.

A cross-sectional study done by Sang Hyeop Lee et al. (2017), to investigate the Effect of Korean wave towards Malaysian University students' perception, had 6 Malaysian university students as its participants and had all six students reporting a willingness to spend money on Korean products, with one specifically mentioning paying double the price for a concert ticket. This significantly shows that the economic status of students influences their willingness to spend money on Korean products such as CDs and concert tickets.

A study done by Fandy Zenas Tjoe et al. (2016), with an aim to investigate how the Korean Wave, ethnocentrism, and country-of-origin image affect Indonesian consumers' intention to purchase Korean products. The study also examines the impact of the overall image of Korea on purchase intentions. The results of the study have shown that the popularity of Korean culture and consumer ethnocentrism significantly affects consumer purchase intentions. However, it was found that the general image of Korea as a country does not significantly affect purchase intentions.

A study done by Haggai Kennedy Ochieng et al. (2019), to understand how the Korean wave influences African consumer behaviour, specifically focusing on value proximity and attitudes towards Korea. This study has revealed that exposure to Korean wave content contributes to forming a favourable attitude towards Korea and African consumers who engage with Korean cultural products are likely to purchase

other Korean commercial products.

2.3 Perception towards the Effects of K-Pop Idolisation

Perception towards K-Pop idolisation refers to how individuals view and interpret the phenomenon of idolizing K-Pop stars (Sudwintari and Perangin-angin, 2022). This perception can vary widely and encompasses a range of attitudes and beliefs about the impact and significance of K-Pop idols in fans' lives. This study focus on perception which can be categorized as self-esteem and non- pathological forms. Self-esteem is define as individual's overall view of yourself - your perception of your abilities and limitations (Mayo, 2020). A study by Wu, Kesaprakorn and Limvarakul (2021) revealed that Super Junior's idol significantly influenced the Chinese fan club's self-esteem ($\beta = 0.287^{**}$, $p < 0.05$).

In another study, Laffan (2020) similarly identified positive associations between being a K-Pop fan and levels of self-esteem. The desire for a sense of belonging among youth is fulfilled through K-pop, which effectively creates large global fan communities. Consequently, an increase in self-esteem becomes inevitable. (Laffan, 2020).

According to McCutcheon et al. (2002), non-pathological represents a healthy enthusiasm towards a favourite celebrity. Fans often see K-Pop idols as role models and sources of inspiration, fostering a sense of community and belonging within fandoms (Kim et al., 2021). According to a study by Lee et al. (2017), on the effect of K-pop idols towards Malaysian University students' perception describe that the students have a positive perception about the K-pop idols.

2.4 Gender and Academic Performance

In a study done by Algarni et al. (2024) studying the self-efficacy and academic performance by gender in a flipped learning haematology course in biomedical students. a sample of 86 3rd year Saudi medical students were chosen in a 10-week haematology course. The students were assigned into 2 groups, one a flipped learning group and a traditional lecture group. The study found that there is no difference between gender and academic performances. It is found that female students in the flipped learning group showed the greatest increase in academic scores and self-efficacy.

In a study done by Humberto et al. (2023), in a study of discovering the gender gap, to find the difference in motivation, procrastination, environment and academic performance in an introductory physics course in a private university in northeast Mexico. The goal of this study is to explore potential gender differences in student profiles, such as their motivation and level of procrastination using Kruskal-Wallis's correlation tests and measuring the effect size using cohen'sd. A sample of 249 students was recruited. In the study, it is found that the female has a better academic performance. In the study, it is found that this is due to significant differences in extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation, where the female group has a higher intrinsic motivation, while the male reported to have a higher level of procrastination.

In a study done by Gaffat.T et al. (2024), comparing the academic performance of students throughout the year and the sendup exam with respect to gender. The aim of the study is to assess and compare the academic performance of male and female undergraduate dental students at Sharif Medical and Dental College. this study has a sample size of 491 students, and their academic performances were assessed from oral pathology records. it is found that there is a significant correlation between gender and academic performance, where females outperform males.

2.5 Gender and Socioeconomic status

In a study done by Nilesh et al. (2024) studying the impact of gender and income on impulsive apparel

purchase choices, this study aims to investigate and examine the impact of gender and income on impulsive purchase and it is found that females tend to be the impulsive buyers than male, and repurchase of impulsively brought product is higher in female than males.

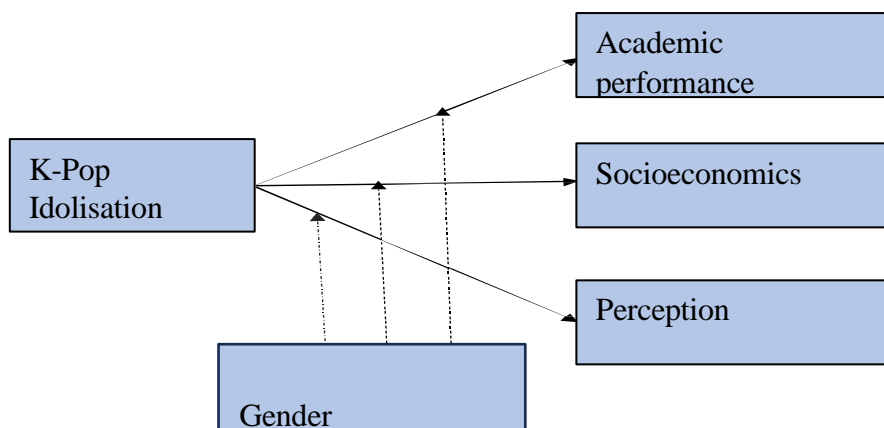
In a study done by Julia Kallio (2021) studying how changing of gender roles affect sustainable consumption habits, the purpose of this study is to investigate those factors that affects the differences in consumption. This study was conducted through qualitative method, where interviews were conducted. In this study, there is no correlation between gender and consumption habits.

2.6 Gender and K-pop Perception

A study done on media effect of Korean pop culture toward the gender identity of Malaysian university male, done by Xin Yi et al. (2022), the aim of the study is to discover the effect of media on gender identity and to find out the extend of acceptance of soft masculinity in the media. This study involves 10 university students from UTAR, aged between 21-23 to be interviewed. All the 10 students had a positive attitude toward Korean popular culture, and they agree that the mass media heavily reconstructed their gender identity in terms of physical appearance and internal characteristics.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

Figure 2.8 shows the proposed conceptual framework for the effects of K-pop idolisation towards academic performance, socioeconomics, and perception in university students in Klang Valley, Malaysia.



CHAPTER 3

MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1 Study Design

The study design used for this research is a cross-sectional study.

3.2 Reference Population

The population used in the reference was students who idolised K-pop celebrities, coming from universities students from Klang Valley, that are in various level of background such as foundation, degree, masters and PHD.

3.3 Sample Population

The population used in the study will be university students of varying ages and genders, regardless of their faculties, coming from all private and public universities in the vicinity of Klang Valley, Malaysia.

3.4 Study Participants

3.4.1 Inclusion Criteria

1. Able to give informed consent.
2. Is generally exposed to Korean media.
3. Students who are in foundation, diploma, undergraduate, and postgraduate students in public and private universities in Klang Valley.

3.4.2 Exclusion Criteria

1. Suffering from any disabilities or medical conditions that impedes abilities to respond to an online questionnaire.
2. Replicated responses from multiple students.
3. Those who are not willing to participate in the study.
4. Those who are studying outside of Klang Valley.

3.5 Sample Size

The sample size in this study will be calculated using the Single Proportions formula: $n = p(1-p) \times (z/m)^2$

n = sample size

p = anticipated population proportion z = 95% confidence level

m = precision on either side of proportion Below is the sample size calculation:

$$n = (1.96/0.05)^2 \times 0.24(1-0.24)$$

$$= (3.8416/0.0025)^2 \times 0.1875$$

$$= 1536.64 \times 0.1875$$

$$n = 280.28$$

Based on a previous study done by Nurul Ain et al. (2020) in the study of prevalence of K-pop idolisation among university students, the prevalence of university students that displays high idolisation was 0.24. By substituting the values in the formula, a sample size of 280 was obtained. Another 10% of participants is added acting as a precautionary step for any incomplete response, a final total of 308 sample size was obtained.

3.6 Sampling method

Stratified random sampling method was used in this study in which the population of our study divided into stratas and the number of responses will be limited to the number of respondents acquired from each stratum.

3.7 Data collection

Data for the study will be collected using a softcopy self-administered questionnaire that will be distributed via several platforms such as email, Gmail and WhatsApp. The email address is obtained by contacting the university admins. The questionnaire is shared until the desired sample size is obtained. Data collection will be done anonymously where personal information such as names or phone numbers will not be required.

The purpose and significance of the research as well as the guaranteed confidentiality of the data and the

informed form will be included at the start of the questionnaire. The consent form will state the inclusion criteria to ensure that respondents can only proceed with the study if they determine they meet the requirements and agree to voluntarily participate in the research.

Consent is gained by filling out the Respondent Information Sheet, which will be attached to the questionnaire. Once consent is obtained, respondents can proceed with the questionnaire. It can only be submitted after it has been completed. Information obtained will automatically be recorded in the Google Form system. The form will be closed once the sample size has been attained.

Data obtained will only be accessible to researchers and privacy and confidentiality will be strictly maintained. Respondent's information will be stored digitally on an external hard drive protected by a password that is only accessible by the researchers. Data collected will be destroyed after 3 years. No personal information will be collected, published or presented.

3.8 Research Tools

Section 1: Sociodemographic Characteristics

This section contains 5 items which are age, gender, years being a K-pop fan, associated university and level of education.

Section 2: Assessment of K-POP Idolisation

K-pop idolisation is assessed with the Stephen Reysen-fanship scale. This section contains 11 items, they are statements, and the subject would need to give a rating of 1 which is strongly disagree, and 9 which is strongly agree.

Section 3: Assessment of Academic Performance

Academic performance is measured using the current GPA of the subject.

Section 4: Assessment of Socioeconomics Status

There are 20 items in this section. The subject would need to give a rating of 1 to 5, where 1 is "strongly disagree" and 5 is "strongly agree".

Section 5: Perception on Effects of K-Pop Idolisation

There are 5 items in this section. Participants would need to answer, "agree or disagree".

3.9 Data Analysis

Data from the questionnaire will be cleaned and coded using Microsoft Excel and a data dictionary will be designed. The data will be analysed by using Jeffrey's Amazing Statistics Program (JASP) version 0.17 data analysis software.

Descriptive analysis was conducted to identify the sociodemographic characteristics, level of K-pop idolisation, socioeconomic status and perception by calculating the frequency and percentage for categorical variables.

Inferential analysis was performed using Chi-squared test and odds ratio were used to tabulate the study's appropriate findings. The findings are considered statistically significant if the p-value for hypothesis testing is less than 0.05 with the confidence interval of 95%.

3.10 Ethical Issues

Ethical approval has been obtained from the University of Cyberjaya Research Ethics Committee. Individual consent from each of the participant to participate in this study (Appendix 2). Information was obtained in the period of the study were kept strictly confidential. There is no information that revealed the identity of any individual which includes the final report or in other communication prepared throughout the course of this study. Consent was given to the participants together with the questionnaire survey. Participants is voluntary and return of the questionnaire were considered as consent to participate. Verbal consent was obtained from the respondents to carry out for this study. Confidentiality was assured by not releasing respondents’ actual names and instead a pseudonym was used.

3.11 Ethical Approval

Ethical approval for this research will be obtained from University of Cyberjaya Research Ethics Review Committee (CRERC).

Data privacy and confidentiality will be maintained, and the data collected will be analysed by the researchers purely for the purpose of the study. Participants will be provided an informed consent form outlining the study’s objectives and are given the right not to participate. Participants are to fill out the consent form to indicate their voluntary participation.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

4.1 Sociodemographic Characteristics

Table 4.1.1: Sociodemographic characteristics of university students in Klang Valley

Sociodemographic Characteristics		
Age	Frequency,	Percentage, %
≤ 20	93	29.52
≥ 21	222	70.48
Gender		
Male	91	28.89
Female	224	71.11
Level of education		
Foundation	46	14.60
Diploma	39	12.38
Degree	216	68.57
Postgraduate	14	4.45
How many years have you been a K-Pop fan?		
1 - 3 years	117	37.14

4 - 7 years	113	35.87
8 - 10 years	45	14.29
≥ 11 years	40	12.70

Table 4.1.1 shows a total of 315 respondents that has participated in this study. The sociodemographic characteristics variables included age, gender, level of education, and years of being a K-Pop fan. From the total of 315 students who participated in this research, it was found that most of the respondents were in the age of 21 years old and above (70.48%). There were more female respondents (71.11%) than male respondents (28.89%) involved in this study.

Furthermore, the level of education of respondents can be divided into 4 groups which are foundation, diploma, degree, and postgraduate. Degree respondents obtained the most dominant percentage which was 68.57% compared to foundation, diploma, and postgraduate which had the lowest percentage which were 14.6%, 12.38%, and 4.45%, respectively. Regarding years of being a K-Pop fan, majority of the respondents has been a K-Pop fan for 1 – 3 years with a percentage of 37.14% followed by the minority of the respondents which has been a K-Pop fan for more than 11 years (12.7%).

4.2 K-Pop Idolisation Level

Table 4.2.1: Distribution of responses to the assessment of level of K-Pop idolisation among university students in Klang Valley

No	Statements	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> Very Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 </div> <div style="font-size: 2em;">→</div> <div style="text-align: center;"> Very Strongly Agree 8 9 </div> </div>								
1	I have rescheduled my work to accommodate my interest.	72	24	34	28	44	32	33	17	31
2	I am emotionally	36	16	31	24	41	40	51	30	46
3	I spend a considerable amount of money on my interest.	78	24	21	28	45	37	31	23	28
4	I do not devote much	39	39	56	37	48	25	31	13	27
5	I want everyone to know I am connected to my interests	59	35	39	33	57	33	27	19	13
6	I would devote all my time to my interest if I could.	64	36	34	35	35	28	46	21	16
7	I would be devastated if I were told I could not pursue my interest.	63	22	29	30	57	41	32	20	21
8	I strongly identify with	41	18	25	28	49	47	48	32	27

9	When my interest is popular, I feel great.	33	10	17	22	43	35	42	55	58
10	My interest is part of me.	34	22	20	27	42	34	41	58	37
11	I want to be friends with people who like my interests.	29	17	20	19	48	46	33	33	70

The survey responses, as shown in Table 4.2.1, were analysed by calculating the frequency using Microsoft Excel. To interpret the findings, the study by Reysen and Branscombe (2010) was used as a guide to categorize fans' interests into two groups. The results are presented in Table 4.2.2.

Table 4.2.2: K-Pop idolisation level among university students in Klang Valley

K-Pop Idolisation Level	Score Range	Frequency, n	Percentage, %
Prospective / Casual/ Avid Fan	11 – 69	241	77.0
Die-Hard / Superfan	70 – 99	74	23.0

Table 4.2.2 stated that 77.0% of the total respondents were categorised in prospective/ casual and avid fan while 23.0% were in die-hard and superfan.

4.3 GPA

4.3.1 Latest GPA among university students in Klang Valley

Table 4.3.1 Latest GPA among university students in Klang Valley

What is your latest GPA?	Frequency, n	Percentage, %
First class	15	4.76
Second class upper	142	45.08
Second class lower	158	50.16

Table 4.3.1 shows out of 315 number of respondents most were in the second class lower ($\leq 2.8 - < 2.0$) were followed by second category which is second upper class ($\leq 3.5 - < 2.8$) that carry 45.08% of total respondents. The least number for this latest GPA were noted to be the first class ($\leq 4.0 - < 3.5$) with 4.76%. To interpret the findings, the range of GPA were taken from the changes of

selected academic policies and procedures in IIUM class of honours equivalency 2019.

4.4 Socioeconomic

Table 4.4.1: Distribution of responses to the assessment of socioeconomic status among university students in Klang Valley

No	Statements	Strongly Disagree, n (%)			→	Strongly Agree, n (%)	
1	I do volunteer work for a hospital or service organization on a regular basis.	93 (29.52)	55 (17.46)	79 (25.08)		52 (16.51)	36 (11.43)
2	I think I have more self-confidence than most people.	29 (9.21)	57 (18.10)	114 (36.19)		81 (25.71)	34 (10.79)
3	I think I am more independent than most people.	10 (3.17)	29 (9.21)	86 (27.30)		112 (35.56)	78 (24.76)
4	I think I have lots of personal ability.	15 (4.76)	35 (11.11)	87 (27.62)		120 (38.10)	58 (18.41)
5	I like to be considered a leader.	38 (12.06)	71 (22.54)	98 (31.11)		67 (21.27)	41 (13.02)
6	I sometimes influence what my friends buy.	29 (9.21)	59 (18.73)	102 (32.38)		76 (24.13)	49 (15.55)
7	People come to me more often than I go to them for information about brands.	40 (12.70)	73 (23.17)	98 (31.11)		68 (21.59)	36 (11.43)
8	I think that purchasing K-pop merchandise is favourable.	58 (18.41)	46 (14.60)	92 (29.20)		80 (25.40)	39 (12.38)
9	I think that purchasing K-pop merchandise is a good idea.	54 (17.14)	45 (14.29)	95 (30.16)		80 (25.40)	39 (12.38)
10	I think that K-pop merchandise products are safe.	30 (9.52)	26 (8.25)	104 (33.02)		98 (31.11)	57 (18.10)
11	My family thinks that I should purchase K-pop merchandise rather than normal products.	148 (46.98)	77 (24.44)	55 (17.46)		23 (7.30)	12 (3.81)
12	My close friends think that I should purchase K-pop merchandise rather than normal products.	86 (27.30)	84 (26.67)	91 (28.89)		39 (12.38)	15 (4.76)

13	Most people who are important to me think I should purchase K-pop merchandise rather than normal products.	105 (33.33)	72 (22.86)	77 (24.44)	45 (14.29)	16 (5.08)
14	I am confident that I can purchase K-pop merchandise rather than normal products when I want.	84 (26.67)	58 (18.41)	70 (22.22)	68 (21.59)	35 (11.11)
15	I see myself as capable of purchasing K-pop merchandise in the future.	75 (23.81)	46 (14.60)	62 (19.68)	85 (26.98)	47 (14.92)
16	I have resources, time, and willingness to purchase K-pop merchandise.	86 (27.30)	49 (15.56)	60 (19.05)	75 (23.81)	45 (14.29)
17	There are likely to be plenty of opportunities for me to purchase K-pop merchandise	70 (22.22)	39 (12.38)	69 (21.90)	91 (28.89)	46 (14.60)
18	I intend to purchase K-pop merchandise next time.	95 (30.16)	51 (16.19)	56 (17.77)	69 (21.90)	44 (13.97)
19	I plan to purchase more K-pop merchandise rather than normal products.	106 (33.65)	70 (22.22)	77 (24.44)	30 (9.52)	32 (10.16)
20	I will consider switching to Korean brands.	63 (20)	55 (17.46)	105 (33.33)	55 (17.46)	37 (11.75)

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral/Uncertain
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

The survey responses based on Table 4.4.1 were analysed by calculating the percentage and frequency using Microsoft Excel. To interpret the findings, the frequency and percentage of each item in the questionnaire were identified, following the guidelines for percentage score interpretation suggested by Aghar et al. (2020). The results are presented in Table 4.4.2.

Table 4.4.2 Interpretation of percentage scores

Percentage scores	Score interpretation
75% to 100%	High
0 to 74%	Low

Source: Aghar et al. (2020)

Table 4.4.3: Socioeconomic status among university students in Klang Valley

Socioeconomic status	Frequency, n	Percentage, %
High	44	13.97
Low	271	86.03

Based on interpretation of percentage scores in Table 4.4.2, it showed that 86.03% of the total respondents had a low socioeconomic status while 13.97% had a high socioeconomic status.

4.5 Perception towards K-Pop idolisation

Table 4.5.1: Respondents K-Pop Idolisation Perception Items

Statements	Agree, n (%)	Disagree, n (%)
When something good happens to my favourite celebrity I feel like it happened to me.	151 (47.94)	164 (52.06)
The successes of my favourite celebrity are my successes also.	147 (46.67)	168 (53.33)
When my favourite celebrity dies (or died), I will feel (or felt) like dying too.	57 (18.10)	258 (81.90)
When something bad happens to my favourite celebrity I feel like it happened to me.	105 (33.33)	210 (66.67)
When my favourite celebrity fails or loses at something I feel like a failure myself.	49 (15.56)	266 (84.44)

Table 4.5.2: Perception towards K-Pop Idolisation among university students in Klang Valley

Perception	Frequency, n	Percentage, %
Positive	268	85.07
Negative	47	14.91

Given that we have 5 questions on perceptions towards K-Pop idolisation, we use a cutoff score greater than or equal to three to further categorize responses into two groups: positive and negative perceptions. Positive perceptions indicate that respondents agree that K-pop idolisation has a beneficial impact on them, while negative perceptions indicate the opposite. Thus, the Table 4.5.2 showed two categories of group with 85.07% of the respondents had a positive perception of K-Pop idolisation, whereas 14.91% had a negative perception of K-Pop idolisation.

4.6 Association between K-Pop idolisation and academic performance

Table 4.6.1: Association between K-Pop idolisation level and academic performance among university students in Klang Valley

K-Pop Idolisation level Perception	Academic Performance Level			Total n (%)	Chi Square (X ²)	df	P-value
	First class, n (%)	Second Class, n (%)	Lower Class, n (%)				
Prospective / Casual Avid Fan	9 (3.73)	115 (47.7)	117 (48.5)	241 (100)	4.389	2	0.111
Die-Hard Superfan	6 (8.11)	27 (36.5)	41 (55.41)	74 (100)			

Table 4.6.1 showed that K-pop idolisation has no significant association to academic performance among university students in Klang Valley. P-value more than 0.05 which is 0.111 that indicates that it is not statistically significant.

4.7 Association between K-Pop idolisation and socioeconomic

Table 4.7.1: Association between K-Pop idolisation level and socioeconomic status among university students in Klang Valley

K-Pop Idolisation level	Socioeconomic status		Total n (%)	Odds ratio (95 %CI)	Chi Square (X ²)	df	P-value
	High, n (%)	Low, n (%)					
Prospective / Casual Avid Fan	14 (5.8)	227 (94.2)	241 (100)	11.055	56.831	1	<.001
Die-Hard Superfan	30 (40.5)	44 (59.5)	74 (100)				

Table 4.7.1 showed that K-pop idolisation has a significant association to socioeconomic status among university students in Klang Valley with a P-value of less than 0.05 which is <0.001. Therefore, it is statistically significant and null hypothesis rejected. An odds ratio (OR) is a statistical measure that quantifies the strength of the association between two events (Szumilas, 2010). As Szumilas (2010) explains, the interpretation of the OR is as follows:

- OR = 1: The odds of the event are the same in both groups. There is no association between the exposure and the outcome.
- OR > 1: The odds of the event are greater in the first group. This suggests a positive association between the exposure and the outcome.
- OR < 1: The odds of the event are lower in the first group. This suggests a negative association between the exposure and the outcome.

In this study, the odds ratio of 11.055 suggest that respondents in die-hard and superfan have 11.055 times more likely to have a high socioeconomic status compared to those in prospective, casual and avid fan.

4.8 Association between K-Pop idolisation and perception

Table 4.8.1 The effect of K-Pop idolisation towards their perception among university students in Klang Valley.

K-Pop Idolisation level	Perception		Total n (%)	Odds ratio (95 %CI)	Chi Square (X ²)	df	P-value
	Positive, n (%)	Negative, n (%)					
Prospective / Casual Avid Fan	213 (88.4)	28 (11.6)	241 (100)	2.628	8.813	1	0.003
Die-Hard Superfan	55 (74)	19 (26)	74 (100)				

Table 4.8.1 revealed that K-pop idolisation has an impact on university students in Klang Valley perceptions with a p-value of less than 0.05 which is 0.003. Therefore, it is statistically significant and null hypothesis rejected. This odds ratio of 2.628 suggest that respondents in prospective, casual, avid fan have 2.628 times more likely to have a positive perception towards the effect of K-Pop idolisation compared to die-hard and superfan.

4.9 Association between sociodemographic factors and academic performance, socioeconomics and

perception

Table 4.9.1: Association between gender and academic performance among university students in Klang Valley

Gender	First Class, n (%)	Second class, n (%)	Lower Class, n (%)	Total, n (%)	Chi-square value (df)	P-value
Male	6 (6.59%)	43 (47.25%)	42 (46.15%)	91 (100%)	2	0.486
Female	9 (4.02%)	99 (44.20%)	116 (51.79%)	224 (100%)		

The P-value for the association between gender and academic performance is 0.486. Since its more than 0.05, there is no association between gender and academic performance.

4.9.2 Association between Gender and Socioeconomics

Table 4.9.2: Association between gender and socioeconomic status among university students in Klang Valley

Gender	High, n (%)	Low, n (%)	Total, n (%)	Chi-square value (df)	P-value
Male	79 (89.68%)	12 (13.19%)	91 (100%)	1	0.799
Female	177 (52.23%)	47 (20.98%)	224 (100%)		

The P-value for the association between gender and socioeconomics is 0.799. since its more than 0.05, therefore there is no association between gender and socioeconomics.

4.9.3 Association between Gender and Perception

Table 4.9.3 Association between gender and perception towards K-pop of university students in Klang Valley

Gender	Positive, n (%)	Negative, n (%)	Total, n (%)	Chi square value (df)	P-value
Male	13 (14.29%)	78 (85.71)	91 (100%)	1	0.840
Female	32 (14.29%)	190 (84.82%)	224 (100%)		

The P-value for the association between gender and perception is 0.840. since its more than 0.05, therefore there is no association between gender and perception.

**CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION**

5.1 Association between K-Pop idolisation and academic performance among university students in Klang Valley.

The results of our study have shown that there is no association between K-pop idolisation and academic performance, with 4.8% of fans performing within the First Class Honours, 45.1% of fans within the Upper Second Class and the remaining 50.2% of fans within the Lower Second Class. These values have demonstrated a p-value of 0.111, which is more than 0.05, proving that it is statistically insignificant, hence we are unable to reject the null hypothesis. This result is in proper alignment with the previous study with the title “Kebijaksanaan dan fanatisme pada penggemar K-Pop” by Salsabela Diema Yorenagea Hayati et. Al, (2022), which shows that the findings of this research are inconsistent with the hypothesis, which holds that one of the variables having a negative relationship with K-pop idolisation is a person's academic performance or level of wisdom. The findings also indicate that there is no significant relationship between the fanaticism and wisdom variables. This shows that there are other elements, such as self-control, emotional maturity, social cohesiveness, and conformity, which have been scientifically verified in previous correlating research, that have a link with fanaticism instead of the degree of K-pop idolisation. However, the results of our study are found to be opposing an older study made by Errol Ace L. Agatep et al. (2014), where they have found a positive association between K-pop idolisation and academic performance. Specific elements of K-pop that are most relevant to academic achievement were found to be the K-pop music rhythm and music video to be the most appealing to Lorma Colleges Special Science High School’s third-and fourth-year students. The result of our study also goes against another cross- sectional study done by J Carbonell et al. (2017) studying K-pop sensation and academic performance of Grade 12 students at Cagayan National high school which showed that there is a significant relationship between the addiction towards K-drama and Academic performance.

These insights are extremely valuable in understanding one’s levels of involvement in their interest and their performance in terms of academic obligations and individual objectives. Hence, it is imperative to understand through this study that just as with many other interests or pastime we have, moderation is key, and K-pop fans must learn to reconcile their love of idolising their favourite artists with their scholastic responsibilities and goals.

5.2 Association between K-Pop idolisation and socioeconomic status among university students in Klang Valley.

K-pop idolisation has a significant association to socioeconomic status among university students in Klang Valley with a P-value of less than 0.05 which is <0.001 . Therefore, it is statistically significant, and our study can reject the null hypothesis. Our findings also align with the previous research done by Putri Vita Nadia et al., 2022, studying the financial literacy, lifestyle, consumptive behaviour of K-Pop fans in the Covid-19 pandemic with religiosity as a moderating variable which demonstrated that financial literacy has a significant positive effect on consumption behaviour it is seen as a consumer learning process that influences purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, lifestyle significantly affects consumer behaviour, in which a better lifestyle correlates with better consumption behaviour. The findings of our study are also consistent with a cross-sectional study done by Sang Hyeop Lee et al. 2017, to investigate the Effect of Korean wave towards Malaysian University students' perception, where all the participants reported a willingness to spend money on Korean products. In another sense, the results of our investigation are in line with a study done by Haggai Kennedy Ochieng et al., 2019, to understand how the Korean wave influences African consumer behaviour, specifically focusing on value proximity and attitudes towards Korea, which revealed that exposure to Korean wave content contributes to forming a favourable attitude towards Korea and consumers who engage with Korean cultural products are likely to purchase other Korean commercial products due to its influence.

Even if it is evident that financially literate K-pop fans tend to spend less, they have the utmost willingness to support their favourite idols, and with good social backgrounds which covers various factors, one is able to manage their finances well and with the accessibility of various Korean products with variable price points, it is all the more easier for K-pop fans to support their idols with a more affordable price to avoid luxurious spending. This is more influenced with the ever-growing reach that Korean media has at a global level to this date. Many Asians, as seen from the present study along with many East African, as proved by a previous study stated above perceive a sense of value proximity with Korea and its celebrities, influenced by values of respect and humility as these values resonate strongly with the populations in question. The exposure to this aspect of the Korean wave also suggests that consumers are more likely to purchase other Korean cultural and commercial products.

Overall, this study has proven that while the K-pop fandom can be inclusive and accessible to individuals from various socioeconomic backgrounds, socioeconomic status can still influence the extent of one's participation and engagement with the K-pop industry.

5.3 Association between effects of K-Pop idolisation towards their perception among university students in Klang Valley.

The present study aimed to determine the association between the effects of K-pop idolisation towards their perception among university students in Klang Valley. Our results revealed there is statistically positive effects of K-pop idolisation towards perception among university students in Klang Valley. These findings are consistent with previous research conducted by Wu, Kesaprakorn, and Limvarakul (2021) and Laffan (2020). The findings of the current study showed that the respondents agreed with the statements of perceptions, and they believe their perceptions could change dramatically due to K-Pop idolisation.

5.4 Association between gender towards academic performance, socioeconomic status, and perception among university students in Klang Valley.

In gender and academic performance, our results are shows there is no association between gender and academic performance. This is aligned with the previous study done by Algarni et al in 2024 where in that study, there is no significant association between the 2 genders. But in Algarni studies when correlating between study method and study performances, it is found that studying with the traditional method performs more poorly compared using flipped learning, but between the two genders, there is no significant difference seen when using either using traditional or the flipped learning method. However, based on Humberto et al (2023), our results are against their results as it is found that there is an association between academic performances and gender. Humberto et al explained that there are differences extrinsic and intrinsic motivation levels are at played between the two genders. It is found that, in female, the extrinsic and intrinsic motivation is higher compared to males. This may explain their tendencies to work harder to outperform their colleagues in class. As for males, it is found that the procrastination levels are higher compared to females. This may mean they tend to skip school, not doing their homework and last-minute studies. This would explain why they tend to not perform better than their counterparts. In Thereen et al studies in 2024, our results are also not aligned with their studies where there is association between gender and academic performances.

In gender and socioeconomics, our results suggested that there are no associations between gender and socioeconomics. In previous studies such as Jullia et al (2021), the researcher also found out that there were no associations between the two factors. But in a paper by Nilesh et al 2024, this paper found that there is an association between gender and impulsive appeal purchase choices. In their paper, it is found out that the impulsive buying is due to external factors such as discounts and promotions. Correlating with that, our results may show no difference between the genders is because of the population of the study that we have chosen, students are generally more controlling of their spending as they do not have income and heavily rely on part time jobs, parents or scholarships and loans. Due to that, they would think twice before making any purchase as any deficit may jeopardise their month. It is also hard to find K-pop merchandise in Malaysia, causing less money spent on buying K-Pop merchandise.

The perception and gender based on our studies, there were no association between gender and perception. Both genders may hold a different view towards K-pop individually and due to the influence of online media. A study done by Xin yi et al in 2022, found that university students from UTAR holds positive perception towards K- pop. Mass media has played a significant role in making the younger generation to be more accepting of K-pop. Popular dramas and bands, help to spread the popularity of K-pop to a wider audience. With reality television shows as well, this builds the positive perception of K-pop into the hearts of university students. K-pop songs are also very catchy, and students may hear them to distress. This would build up the positive perception of K-pop.

CHAPTER 6

LIMITATION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 Limitation

Although we have tried to our utmost level to achieve the objectives of this study to the best of our capabilities, this study has been met with several limitations.

One limitation of this research is the potential for bias, more specifically non- response bias which occurs when the individuals who choose not to participate in the survey differ in important ways from those who do choose to answer the survey. For example, if the non-responders have significant answers essential for the reliability and validity of the data collected in terms of different levels of K-pop idolisation or different

academic performance compared to other respondents, the results might not accurately represent the whole population of university students in Klang Valley. Ultimately, this can skew the data, leading to inaccurate conclusions about the association between K-pop idolisation and academic performance, socioeconomic status, or perception.

Another limitation faced by this research is a geographical limitation. The study is limited to university students in Klang Valley, a specific metropolitan area in Malaysia. Although it might be densely populated with university students and may prove to properly represent the vast majority of students all over the country or the world, this area of the country has unique cultural, social and economic characteristics which cannot be compared with other regions in Malaysia or other countries as well. Hence, we understand that these findings might not be generalizable to university students in other regions of Malaysia or other countries, where cultural influences and the prevalence of K-pop idolisation could differ in significant ways.

Sample representation could also be a limitation in this study. Even with a calculated sample size and stratified random sampling, there is no guarantee that the sample perfectly represents the broader student population. Factors like the specific universities' chosen, the disciplines of study from which we got respondents from, and the willingness of the students to participate call all come into the greater picture in regard to sample representation. If certain subgroups such as students from less prestigious or less common universities coming from less common disciplines are underrepresented in our study, the findings obtained might not fully capture the diversity of experiences and attitudes among all university students. The data collection method, where using self-administered questionnaires distributed via email can introduce the possibility of several biases such as response bias might occur, in which students who are more engaged with their email or more interested in K-pop might be more likely to respond. Respondents might not always answer honestly or accurately, especially if they feel their responses might be judged. An example of this would be where our questionnaire asks students for their latest GPA. These biases can inherently affect the reliability of the data collected, potentially leading to any over- or under-estimation of the association being studied.

Lastly, the study excludes students with disabilities or medical conditions that impede their ability to respond to an online questionnaire. This exclusion means that the findings might not be fully inclusive or representative of the entire student population. Students with disabilities or certain medical conditions might have different experiences or levels of K-pop idolisation that are not captured in the study.

6.2 Recommendation

To enhance the inclusivity of the study, it is recommended to expand the current inclusion criteria to all public and private university in Malaysia, which currently only includes university students in the Klang Valley. By broadening the criteria to involve students from universities in other regions as well with various background, cultural belief and their personal value, this study can yield a more comprehensive range of results that more likely to present the entire population of sample size and directly contribute to the applicability of our study

Additionally, to enhance the reliability and validity of data collection methods, it is advisable to approach each student face-to-face for n instead of using online platform through email. In this way this will avoid any ambiguities by allowing immediate clarification of any doubts and ensure respondents understand the questions fully. This will lead to more accurate and detailed responses compared to online surveys, where

participants may misinterpret questions or provide incomplete answers. While online survey maybe convenient and can reach a wider audience quickly, they have the downside of not be as effective in capturing high quality, detailed data as face- to-face methods. Therefore, personal engagement with each respondent is highly recommended as this will significantly contribute to the overall credibility of this research findings.

Besides, perception can be subjective which refers to opinions, beliefs, and interpretations that are influenced by personal feelings, experiences, and perspectives rather than being based on factual evidence or objective reality, and this will limit the study as this mostly solely rely on individual preference that can lead to incomplete or biased conclusions. To address this challenge, conducting further study by independent research can help to validate initial findings and verify the strength the results across different settings and populations.

6.3 Conclusion

In our completed study of the effects of K-pop idolisation towards academic performance, socioeconomics and perception, notably each relation has different statistical significance. There was a significant association for relationship between K- pop idolisation towards socioeconomics level and K-pop idolisation towards its perception which in turn to be significantly positive. However, in relation to K-pop idolisation level towards academic performance and sociodemographic factors (gender) towards the academic performance, socioeconomics and perception, all were found to be no significant association. In essence, our study underscores the nature of these relationships, shedding light on where correlations exist and where they do not, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between K-pop idolization and key academic and socio-demographic variables. The completion of this study offers valuable insights for educators across universities to tailor their support strategies for students as acknowledging that K-pop idolization does not affect academic performance, educational institutions can redirect their focus towards offering diverse learning opportunities that directly contribute to maintaining students' performance levels. Moreover, our study provides an opportunity for students to reflect their level of engagement for a harmonious equilibrium between their academic pursuits, socioeconomic obligations, and the perception of their interests. It actively promotes a holistic approach to personal development to cultivate a well-rounded lifestyle that encompasses both academic and leisure interests in a balanced manner.

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