CULTIVATION THEORY: THE EFFECTS OF PROLONGED EXPOSURE TO K-IDOL ON IMPRESSIONS OF K-CULTURE AMONG MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Yap Si En

APPROVAL FORM

This research paper attached hereto, entitled Cultivation Theory: The Effects Of Prolonged Exposure To K-Idol On Impressions Of K-Culture Among Malaysian University Students prepared and submitted by Yap Si En in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Media and Creative Studies (Hons) is hereby accepted.

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ABSTRACT

In the digital era, widespread social media adoption has fuelled Malaysian university students' interest in K-culture, resulting in the adoption of K-idols' fashion, the purchase of endorsed products, and financial and academic consequences. Therefore, this research aims to explore how extended exposure to K-idols influences the perceptions of K-culture among Malaysian university students. By examining the links between students' views of K-idols and their perspectives on Kculture, this research sheds light on the impact of media consumption and the evolving dynamics of cross-cultural influence. This quantitative research utilised a Likert scale questionnaire distributed to Malaysian university students via Google Forms, with a sample size of 50 students. The analysis uncovers a significant connection between K-idols and university students' growing interest in various aspects of K-culture. Interestingly, even with exposure falling short of the "heavy viewer" criteria as per Cultivation Theory, modest exposure to K-idol media content significantly shapes beliefs and attitudes. The research finds that K-idols' influence extends to cultural exchange and globalisation, enriching university students' understanding of K-culture. Furthermore, the research reveals that K-culture holds a stronger appeal for respondents compared to other cultural elements, highlighting the profound impact of K-idol media content on Malaysian university students' perceptions.

Keywords: K-culture, K-idol, Media Consumption, Social Media, Cultivation Theory

DECLARATION

I declare that the material contained in this paper is the end result of my own work and that due acknowledgement has been given in the bibliography and references to ALL sources be they printed, electronic or personal.

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Introduction 1

Title: Cultivation Theory: The effects of prolonged exposure to K-idol on impressions of K-culture among Malaysian university students.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Amidst the dynamic landscape of the Holocene era, the global phenomenon known as the Korean Wave has surged forward, captivating audiences worldwide with its rich cultural exports. Notably, K-idols, revered as immensely popular artists, have emerged as trailblazers in this phenomenon. This research endeavours to delve into the influence of extended exposure to K-idols on the perceptions of Korean culture (K-culture) among Malaysian university students. By exploring the connections between students' perceptions of K-idols and their perspectives on K-culture, this research seeks to illuminate the impact of media consumption and the ever-evolving dynamics of cross-cultural influence.

1.1 Background of the research

The youth generation's fascination with Korean cultural (K-culture) descriptions led to the creation of K-music, K-dramas, and K-cuisine as a grasp in the nation (Adlina et al., 2021). According to Roll (2021), K-culture is a general word for all things Korean in the fields of entertainment, food, music, film, beauty, and fashion. Apart from that, K-idol is also a famous

culture in Korea. Renowned Korean entertainment agencies such as SM Entertainment, Starship Entertainment, YG Entertainment, HYBE Entertainment, and others have introduced numerous K-pop Idol (K-idol) groups to the market over the past decade (Joo & Lee, 2018). K-idol group is a celebrity group that is normally formed by at least 2 male or female members respectively who are typically talented in dancing and singing in South Korea.

Fans are interacting with their favourite K-idol through social media such as YouTube, Twitter and Instagram or artist-to-fans platforms Weverse, etc. University students may easily feel motivated by their idols by using these media, and this gives them a platform to connect with their favourite idols. Consequently, it is now simpler to know about an idol or to follow them on social media than it was in the past when we interacted passively with conventional media like radio and television. Simply put, it is now extremely simple to connect with the idol through these media.

Due to the expansion of K-idol group trends in recent years, K-idol has gained greater popularity in South-East Asia. One of the nations with a significant K-idol fan base is Malaysia, particularly among university students. K-idol had a significant impact on Malaysian university students, leading them to take a greater interest in K-culture and consequently, the university students are starting to imitate their favourite K-idols. As a result, K-idol's popularity in Malaysia is growing. Besides, its influence can be observed in various parts of Malaysian society, from fashion to music.

1.2 Research Gap

The media influences of K-idols on their fans have not received much research. There is a lack of research on the media influences of K-idols on their fans due to the complex nature of the phenomenon. While there have been studies on the psychological effects of K-pop on its fans, there is a lack of research examining the media influences of K-idols on their fans. Additionally, the research found that K-pop idols are often portrayed as role models and that their fans often look up to them. These findings suggest that the media influences of K-idols on their fans are significant. Prior research frequently only considers K-drama or K-pop while neglecting the person: K-idol's influences on their fans. However, this research will consider the personal influence that K-idols have on their fans and how this can be used to better understand the relationship between the two. Additionally, this research will explore how K-idols can use their influence to create change within their fan bases and how this can impact the fan's sense of self. Whether K-idol positively or negatively influences their fans is always a hotly contested topic. Also, previously published studies are limited to local surveys, and only a few studies focus on Malaysian university students. These are the questions that are being examined here since they are currently unaddressed. A better comprehension of these factors is whether K-idol is an existence that offers a positive influence on university students in Malaysia.

1.3 Problem Statement

Thanks to the widespread adoption of social media, information is now readily accessible from any location, empowering people with the ability to connect and retrieve information regardless of their geographical location. By having social media, approximately 80% of respondents from Malaysia reported that their intense interest in K-culture was the reason they first began learning the Korean language (Alanzalon, 2011). Moreover, more university students are inspired by K-culture by adopting their favourite K-idols' fashion style, utilising their endorsed products, and buying costly celebrities' merchandise or the products their favourite K-idols are using. K-pop fans actively support their favourite artists by purchasing their favourite artists' concert tickets, albums, fan meeting tickets, posters, and other merchandise (Lee & Nornes, 2015a). Lee & Nornes (2015b) also mentioned that some K-pop fans will purchase multiple copies of albums at the same time. Some university students are impressionable and addiction to K-idol may have untold consequences. In recent years, a free photo card of the member's selfie has been included in the CD album. These photo cards are not sold separately and are given out at random. To collect all the photo cards, fans often buy multiple copies of the same album. Other than that, the endorsed products also have fans who will crazily buy a lot to support their K-idol. A hugely popular Korean boy band called EXO was named the Lotte Pepero brand's ambassador in 2014. Since then, Pepero's cumulative sales have reached 1.6 trillion won (Dannita & Deniar, 2021). This showed that the influence of the K-idols affects the fans' keep purchasing of the endorsed products. However, many university students do not have the independent financial ability to purchase these expensive products which may cause untold consequences such as keep asking

parents for money or not paying attention to their studies. This seems to be a common problem that these university students are impressionable and addicted to K-idols.

Apart from that, Malaysia has seen tremendous growth in trends relating to Korean culture in a short period and it has throughout all local industries such as cosmetics, fashion, and cuisine (Adlina et al., 2021). It is increasingly favouring Korean goods over domestic ones in terms of consumer spending (Betty, 2017). There are a lot of beauty products that have become significant in Malaysia. According to Statista, about 59.6 percent of respondents in Malaysia stated that Kbeauty products are highly popular (*K-beauty popularity in Malaysia 2019*, 2020). K-culture seems to have a strong influence on Malaysian respondents. In addition, as fans imitate the K-style popularised by the K-idols, they are increasingly dressing scantily, dyeing their hair with artificial colours, and posing cutely for photographs (Betty, 2017). The university students are especially crazy in pursuit and imitate the K-style by being influenced by the K-idols. As a result, this research's objective is to examine the cultivation effect and how K-idol exposure has affected Malaysian university students towards the view of K-culture.

1.4 Research Objective

This research seeks to understand how the media influences K-idol on university students' perceptions of Korean culture in Malaysia. This is because the trend of K-culture is still growing in Malaysia and many studies have shown that long-term exposure to K-drama or K-pop influences changing their perceptions. According to Cultivation Theory, several previous studies have shown that prolonged exposure to and frequent use of media may change the perceptions, actions, and opinions of its users. We are concerned about the impact of these on how long-term exposure to K-idol has influenced the fandoms, particularly university students, in terms of how they see K-culture. Based on the substance and body of research, I have developed the following research objectives:

RO1: To analyse university students' perceptions of K-idols.

RO2: To examine the influence of these perceptions on university students' views toward K-culture.

1.5 Research Questions

The goal of this research was to comprehend how K-idol's media influence affected Malaysian university students' impressions of K-culture. Based on the foregoing, the research questions below were proposed:

- RQ1: What are the influences of K-idol towards K-culture?
- RQ2: What are the perceptions of Malaysian university students toward K-culture?

1.6 Definition of Terms

The following terms are the keywords to be specified in this research given the setting of the research:

K-culture: K-culture, commonly referred to as Korean culture, is a broad category of South Korean cultural practices. It includes a variety of elements, such as K-pop music, K-dramas that are shown on television, movies, fashion, beauty, food, traditional arts, and modern entertainment (Park et al., 2020). K-culture is a powerful global force that promotes human relationships and has a long-lasting effect on popular culture throughout the world.

K-idol: K-idol also can be known as Korean Idol or K-pop Idol. K-idol is a type of celebrity or a group of celebrities that work in the field of K-pop and they are managed by the entertainment agencies in South Korea. They have devoted followers who assist them through fan organisations and a variety of fan activities. K-idols have influenced popular culture as trend-setters and prominent cultural icons through their music, clothing, and general persona. They have a significant following on social media, where they engage with followers, provide updates, and display their skills.

Media Consumption: Media usage encompasses diverse actions and attitudes tied to consuming content for amusement, engagement, and varied experiences (Niu et al., 2022). Media is accessed through TV, smartphones, and digital ads, involving watching, listening, reading, or interactive engagement for entertainment, education, or personal goals. Technological advancement and

internet availability have transformed media consumption, making it integral to daily life, and offering entertainment, information, social ties, and cultural expression. It significantly shapes views, impacts trends, and nurtures shared cultural encounters in society.

Social Media: The concept of "social" signifies the involvement of individuals in interactive information exchange. In contrast, "media" encompasses channels of communication, like the internet (differing from traditional media forms like TV, radio, and newspapers). Social media pertains to digital communication platforms facilitating users to distribute and access information collectively (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Notably, this includes social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and video-sharing platforms like YouTube, TikTok, etc.

Cultivation Theory: Cultivation theory is a sociocultural theory that suggests media effect occurs like the slow build up and it was developed by George Gerbner in the late 1960s. According to cultivation theory, individuals' views of the social reality around them change over time because of repeated exposure to media material, notably television. This theory contends that television often presents a biased and selective depiction of reality, emphasising standards, beliefs, and values. Because of this, viewers may gradually form a collective perspective of the world that is consistent with the manufactured reality presented by the media because of repeated exposure.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Media and Culture

The mass media is essential for the spread of information and for the delivery of entertainment. Regardless of whether the influence is beneficial or bad, it serves as a potent weapon that contributes to the building and shaping of society, culture, and personal growth. Cultural values, behaviours, and identities are reflected in, supported by, and even changed by media and culture. Roshwalb et al. (1956) emphasise the contemporary era's interconnection of information and ideas while highlighting the media's substantial influence on culture. According to Showkat (2017), there is a direct connection between culture and the media. How individuals see and accept cultural traditions like music, fashion, cuisine, and entertainment is influenced by how such behaviours are portrayed in the media. The way that cultural components are portrayed in the media affects how well people comprehend and interact with various cultural facets.

Lee (2011) analyses the idea of the Korean Wave, a distinctive kind of popular culture that became well-known worldwide and most of the media's coverage of this phenomenon served as a type of commercial nationalism. The promotion and transmission of numerous aspects of K-culture, including K-idols, to a worldwide audience was greatly aided by the media. In the context of Kculture, media, notably K-idols, has a big part to play in promoting and spreading K-cultural characteristics across the globe. With their songs, performances, and media presence, K-idols help viewers outside of South Korea to acquire opinions and impressions about K-culture. According to Lee (2011), various populations interpret and respond to cultural objects, particularly those promoted through the media, differently. People's interactions with and interpretations of cultural phenomena like K-idols can be influenced by things like social conventions, long-standing cultural practices, and media consumption within cultural contexts.

2.2 The Role of K-idols as Ambassadors of K-culture

The success of K-Pop music throughout the world has significantly increased interest in the globalisation of K-culture in recent years. Previous research has highlighted the influential role of K-dramas and K-pop in shaping perceptions of beauty ideals, relationship expectations, and lifestyle choices among Malaysian youths (Phang et al., 2018; Adlina et al., 2021; Chin et al., 2022). For example, Phang et al. (2018) found that exposure to K-dramas influenced Malaysian youth's beauty standards, resulting in a preference for fair skin, slim figures, and double eyelids. Similarly, Adlina et al. (2021) observed that Malaysian youth who were fans of K-pop tended to have heightened expectations for romantic relationships, influenced by the idealised portrayals of love and romance in K-pop music videos. Moreover, Chin et al. (2022) investigated the impact of K-pop on lifestyle choices among Malaysian university students and discovered that K-pop fans were more inclined to adopt Korean fashion trends and dietary habits. Recent studies (Bae et al., 2017; Sári, 2018) show that Korean celebrities with their influential presence in the Asian market driven by the Korean Wave, are shaping consumer trends, with K-pop singers' exceptional looks and fashion sense serving as powerful promoters for Korean fashion brands worldwide. These cultural imports from Korea have sparked a profound desire among university students to emulate

the K-idols they admire and incorporate various elements of K-culture into their own lives. This emulation and adoption of K-culture can extend to students' fashion choices, lifestyle preferences, and social behaviours (Adlina et al., 2021; Chin et al., 2022). Within the realm of K-idol exposure, where Korean words are consistently present in songs, interviews, and interactions, this exposure likely contributes to participants internalising and recognizing these linguistic aspects (Mohd Jenol et al., 2020). Moreover, the convergence of media influence and personal aspirations shows the significant impact of prolonged exposure to K-idols and their associated media content on Malaysian students' impressions of K-culture.

The pivotal role of K-idols in the global entertainment industry as ambassadors of Korea and K-culture is emphasised by Saeji (2022). K-idols play a crucial part in increasing international awareness of Korean music and culture. The vigorous promotion of Korean celebrities by entertainment companies has contributed to the growing international recognition of Korea. To appeal to a broader audience, K-pop musicians have had to adapt their musical styles and aesthetics. Saeji (2022) observes that K-pop performers have incorporated traditional sounds, backgrounds, and symbols into their music videos, as well as engaging in activities and performances that highlight Korean customs. This strategic blending of traditional and contemporary elements in K-Pop serves to further solidify the representation and dissemination of K-culture to global audiences.

2.3 Connection between Malaysian University Students and Korean Wave

University students are notably attuned to the impacts of various societies and cultures. Among their preferences for online content, Korean materials are prominently favoured, with personal social media accounts being a particularly popular source of information (Shen Jia et al., 2018). Research indicates that students in higher education who have been influenced by the Korean Wave exhibit heightened interest in Korean culture, leading to more frequent and preferential consumption of Korean music, dramas, and fashion (Kim & Ahn, 2012). They also display a greater inclination to learn the Korean language and actively seek opportunities to experience K-culture first-hand by visiting Korea. The Korean Wave, which gained momentum in the late 1990s in China through popular television programs, brings both advantages and disadvantages to university students, with its widespread influence notably observed throughout Asia (Lee et al., 2017). The Korean Wave, encompassing drama and K-pop, not only raises awareness of Korea but also sparks growing interest in Korean food, cosmetics, fashion, language learning, and culture, consequently driving a rapid increase in the popularity of the Korean Wave (Bae et al., 2017). According to Betty (2017), the Korean Wave has made Malaysians like Korea more, become more interested in South Korean culture and society, including language and studies, and it has changed the way they think and live. Additionally, it has boosted economic changes like Malaysians preferring Korean food more, more of them visiting South Korea for tourism, and buying more South Korean products. The Korean Wave has nurtured a sense of social connection among these students, allowing them to connect with like-minded individuals and partake in fandom activities together (Jin & Yoon, 2016).

2.4 Social Media and Digital Engagement in K-culture Dissemination

In today's digital era, social media has emerged as a pivotal influence, shaping individuals' perceptions through the content it exposes. The Korean Wave has effectively permeated various

media platforms, ensuring accessibility to Malaysian university students. Among them, Korean variety shows have risen as the favoured content, renowned for their introductions of famous Korean celebrities (Lee et al., 2017). The influence of social media stands out as a driving force behind the cost-effective and extensive dissemination of K-pop. This transformation aligns with the growth and success of the Korean music industry, notably associated with the early adoption of the Internet (Parc & Kim, 2020). According to Lee et al. (2017), Korean entertainment companies have harnessed social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to amplify their online presence. They engage with users, offer exclusive content, and orchestrate unique performances and group activities, including flash mobs and cover dances.

"K-pop has become more than just a type of music; it has turned into a cultural trend where enthusiastic fans create close-knit communities to share their love for it," according to Sári (2018). K-pop musicians and content consistently dominate Twitter's trending topics, highlighting how social media empowers global K-culture enthusiasts. These enthusiasts connect locally and globally, gain profound insights into Korea beyond traditional media, engage actively in cultural practices, and access a broader spectrum of content (Lee et al., 2018). Given that today's youth are deeply intertwined with technology and social media, they exhibit a natural aptitude for online commerce (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Their active participation extends to sharing K-pop content on social media platforms, demonstrating what Kim et al. (2022) refer to as social media citizenship behaviour. Moreover, these cultural products find themselves undergoing extensive sharing, reinterpretation, and infusion of new meanings across diverse global contexts among young audiences. This dynamic resonance showcases the global influence of the modern Korean popular music (K-Pop) industry, with a strong emphasis on a global market. The industry successfully establishes connections with youth worldwide through the distribution of its cultural content via digital media (A. Kim, 2017). In essence, social media has undergone a transformative role in reshaping the promotion of K-pop music. It enables K-pop agencies and idols to establish direct connections with fans and expand global awareness of K-pop.

Live streaming has become popular as a new type of online content because it offers a realtime experience and interaction (Xue et al., 2020). Live streaming allows streamers to communicate and interact with viewers just like they're meeting face-to-face through live video. V Live, a social media platform that enables fans to engage in live streaming and interact with Kidols, has recently undergone a merger with Weverse. Research (Ham & Lee, 2020) has shown that fans who have a strong affiliation with a particular K-idol may utilise V Live for multiple purposes, including accessing information related to K-idol or communicating with both the stars themselves and fellow fans, the cultivation behind using V Live can differ based on the depth of one's fandom.

2.5 Cultivation Theory

Cultivation theory is a sociocultural theory that suggests media effect occurs like the slow build up and it was developed by George Gerbner in the late 1960s. According to Gerbner's Cultivation Theory, individuals who watch television regularly are more prone to see reality as resembling the portrayals shown on television (Gerbner, 1976). This shows that prolonged media exposure can impact how people view and interpret the social world. The Cultivation Theory, developed by George Gerbner, contends that repeated exposure to media messages (e.g., television, prints, social media), such as those seen in media campaigns, might result in a process of normalisation and socialisation. Because of this ongoing exposure, people may develop different ideas about what social behaviours are considered acceptable (Gerbner, 1976). To put it another way, exposure to specific media content on a regular basis might affect how well people comprehend society's norms and expectations. According to this concept, people's perceptions of reality are more likely to mirror what they are exposed to in the media the more time they spend consuming media (Morgan & Shanahan, 2009). Morgan & Shanahan (2010) found that individuals frequently formulate their evaluations on the likelihood of occurrence based on the characteristics of information they recall from memory. Romer et al. (2014) argued that cultivation is not something that happens quickly and can be measured through a short-term effects theory of behaviour; instead, it represents a slow and gradual shift in viewers' overall perspectives and beliefs. This suggests that information becomes more accessible and influential in shaping perceptions when individuals frequently hear, read, watch, or experience it.

2.5.1 "Heavy" and "Light" Viewers

Gerbner categorised individuals who consume media into two groups based on their consuming habits: "heavy" viewers and "light" viewers (Glynn & Jeong, 2003). The categorization of "heavy" viewers and "light" viewers is determined by the amount of time people spend on media each day. According to Gerbner & Gross (1976), people who consume media content more than four hours or more daily are labelled as "heavy" viewers. People who consume media content less than four hours daily fall into the "light" viewers category. This categorization helps differentiate the levels of exposure to media content. "Heavy" viewers are more likely to consistently encounter a wide range of media messages and content due to their substantial exposure to media content. In contrast, "light" viewers have less exposure and may have a more limited experience of the media landscape. This differentiation between heavy and light viewers is crucial within cultivation theory as it enables the investigation of potential variations in perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs between these two groups. The hypothesis suggests that heavy viewers, who experience higher exposure levels and consistent reinforcement of specific messages and themes presented in media, may exhibit more pronounced cultivation effects, such as the shaping of social reality.

2.5.2 Cultivation theory on social media

Television was the focus of the research in cultivation theory previously. However, social media has emerged as a significant area of interest for the research of cultivation effects in today's digital era. Social media has become the most engaging platform and warrants institutional and theoretical examination like how Gerbner applied his theories to television (Nevzat, 2018). Social media possesses the capacity to influence how people perceive the world, as both mediums create

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a shared space where stories and values are communicated to large audiences (Tsay-Vogel et al., 2018). Unlike television, social media messages tend to be more scattered, personalised, and limited to specific social groups due to the nature of social networks (Wei et al., 2020). This theory, suggesting that repeated exposure to media can shape our perceptions, has been further explored by numerous researchers, including Schiappa et al. (2006), who investigated the influence of media exposure and how the content itself can influence cultivation effects.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This research seeks to understand how Malaysian university students perceive Korean culture under the influence of K-idol media. Quantitative research was applied in this research, which involves collecting and analysing numerical data. The quantitative approach allows us to identify trends, make predictions, test cause-and-effect relationships, and draw conclusions that can be applied to larger populations (Bhandari, 2020). A sample size of 50 respondents will be selected to represent the general public's opinions effectively. To participate, individuals must meet these criteria: (a) be a fan of K-idols, (b) be a Malaysian university student, and (c) age within the range of 18 to 26. To ensure randomness and inclusivity, the survey will be distributed via email and various social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram. By utilising a combination of online channels, the research aims to engage a diverse group of respondents and gain a comprehensive understanding of how K-idol media has influenced Malaysian university students' perceptions of Korean culture.

3.2 Sampling

In this research, convenience sampling was utilised as a data collection method, which involves selecting respondents based on their convenient accessibility. However, it is important to acknowledge that the results and conclusions drawn from this sampling approach have limitations and cannot be generalised to the entire population (Edgar & Manz, 2017). Although convenience sampling offers practicality by facilitating easy data collection, caution must be exercised when attempting to apply the findings to a broader context. While the research provides valuable insights within the specific group studied, for wider implications and generalizability, further research utilising more representative sampling techniques would be necessary. By employing a more rigorous sampling method, the research could achieve a more representative sample that better reflects the larger population. This would enhance the external validity of the findings and increase the confidence in drawing broader conclusions.

3.3 Procedure

The survey will be carried out between June and July of 2023. The respondents will be reached by an online survey, which will be completed in 5 - 10 minutes. The data will be collected using the online survey, Google Forms. The respondents are required to answer all the questions in the online survey. Participants must provide their full consent before participating in the research. We will seek permission and guarantee the participant's privacy, and we will need the participant to fill out the consent form. To learn more about the respondents, Section A will consist of 6 questions which include a combination of demographic and psychographic questions. To find out the research questions that stated, 7 statements will be given out in Section B, and it will help to find out the influence of K-idol toward K-culture through the perspective of being fans; another 8 statements in Section C will find out the perception of Malaysian university students toward K-

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culture. Sections B and C will be the sections that require the respondents to respond, "Strongly Disagree", "Disagree", "Neutral", "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" with the statement given.

3.4 Measurement

After collecting the data from Google Form, the research will employ descriptive statistics to investigate the research objective. According to Fisher & Marshall (2009), descriptive statistics refers to the mathematical and graphical processes used to arrange, display, and analyse data. They provide essential insights into the characteristics of the dataset. Descriptive statistics allow for the organisation and presentation of data in a meaningful manner. Tables, charts, histograms, bar graphs, or scatter plots makes it more accessible for creating visual representations by organising and categorising data. According to Lachenbruch et al. (1985), descriptive statistics prove valuable for detecting potential relationships among different variables, offering insights into possible connections and trends within the dataset. Analysing descriptive statistics for various variables helps in exploring data distribution; at the same time, identifying potential links or trends provides initial indications of relationships.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

The research objective stated in Chapter I will be addressed by a comprehensive analysis of the questionnaire data that was gathered in this chapter. The findings and analysis are organised into three distinct sections: Section A delves into Demographic and Psychographic aspects; Section B explores The Influence of K-idol on K-culture; and Section C investigates the Perceptions of Malaysian university students regarding K-culture.

4.1 Section A: Demographic and Psychographic Analysis

Section A of the survey consisted of 6 items focusing on the demographic and psychographic characteristics of the respondents. This section allows one to have a better understanding of the audience's background characteristics.

4.1.1 Gender



Figure 4.1 Gender of respondents

The purpose of this aspect is to determine the distribution of genders among the respondents who completed the questionnaire. 42 respondents (84%) identified as female, while 8 respondents (16%) identified as male.

4.1.2 Educational Level



Figure 4.2 Education level of respondents

The presented pie chart provides a visual representation of the educational attainment of the survey respondents. As depicted, most respondents, accounting for 38 respondents (76%), have acquired undergraduate degrees. Additionally, 7 respondents (14%) are presently pursuing diplomas, 3 respondents (6%) are in a pre-university phase, and 2 respondents (4%) have obtained master's degrees. It's noteworthy that the focus of this research centres around university students. This dataset holds the potential to significantly contribute to our understanding of the diverse perspectives held by university students at various levels of education.

4.1.3 Ethnicity



Figure 4.3 Ethnicity of respondents

This aspect aims to determine the distribution of ethnicities among a total of 50 respondents. The questionnaire was designed to encompass university students of all ethnic backgrounds in Malaysia. The findings reveal that most respondents identify as Chinese, comprising 41 respondents (82%). This is followed by Malay respondents, accounting for 8 respondents (16%), and Indian respondents, representing 1 respondent (2%).
4.1.4 Respondents' time spent on the K-idol per day

4. How many hours do you spend on K-Idol per day (E.g., Watching videos or live streaming) 50 responses



Figure 4.4 Respondents' time spent on the K-idol per day

Figure 4.4 shows the distribution of respondents' daily time spent on K-idol-related activities such as watching videos or live streaming. Out of the total 50 respondents, a significant proportion of 26 respondents (52%) reported dedicating one to four hours per day to engaging with K-idol content. Additionally, 11 respondents (22%) allocated five to ten hours per day to their involvement with K-idols. Moreover, 7 respondents (14%) indicated spending less than one hour per day on K-idol activities. Lastly, 6 respondents (12%) reported dedicating more than 10 hours daily to their engagement with K-idols.



4.1.5 Respondents' most used platform to watch their favourite K-idol's video

5. What platform do you usually watch your favourite K-Idol video?

Figure 4.5 Respondents' most used platform to watch their favourite K-idol's video

Figure 4.5 presents the preferred platforms utilised by respondents to watch videos of their favourite K-idols. The data reveals that a substantial majority of 47 respondents (94%) among the 50 respondents primarily employ YouTube as their chosen platform for viewing K-idol videos. Following closely, 36 respondents (72%) chose Instagram as their second most favoured platform for this purpose, marking the second highest percentage category. Notably, 23 respondents (46%) utilise TikTok to access K-idol videos. Additionally, the usage of other platforms is distributed as follows: 19 respondents (38%) use Twitter, 17 respondents (34%) use Bilibili, and 13 respondents (26%) use Facebook. Moreover, a single respondent each indicated the use of Weibo and XiaoHongShu respectively for accessing K-idol videos.

4.1.6 Respondents' most used platform to watch their favourite K-idol's live-streaming



6. What platform do you usually watch your favourite K-Idol live streaming? ⁵⁰ responses

Figure 4.6 Respondents' most used platform to watch their favourite K-idol's live-streaming

Figure 4.6 shows the preferred platforms used by respondents to engage in live streaming of their beloved K-idols. The data demonstrates a significant majority, with 33 respondents (66%) choosing Instagram as their primary choice for K-idol live streaming. Following closely, 15 respondents (30%) favour Weverse as their second most preferred platform for this purpose, constituting the second highest percentage category. It is noteworthy that 10 respondents (20%) abstain from watching any live streaming altogether. Furthermore, 2 (4%) respondents watch live streaming by using YouTube. Lastly, among the 50 respondents, one respondent stated the use of Beyond Live for accessing K-idol live streaming.

4.2 Section B: The Influence of K-idol toward K-culture

The first objective of this research is to explore the impact of K-idols on K-culture through the perspective of their fans. To fulfil this objective, this section is designed to provide a deeper insight into how K-idols influence K-culture from the perception of their fanbase.

4.2.1 Being a fan of K-idol has made the respondents understand some simple Korean languages



1. Being a fan of K-Idol has made me understand some simple Korean languages. 50 responses

Figure 4.7 Being a fan of K-idol has made the respondents understand some simple Korean languages

This statement examined respondents' perspectives on whether being fans of K-idols has grown their understanding of basic Korean language skills. 28 respondents (56%) strongly agreed with the statement, highlighting that K-idols influence their understanding of Korean language skills. Additionally, 20 respondents (40%) expressed agreement with the statement, indicating that K-idols have indeed played a role in enhancing their familiarity with the Korean language. Furthermore, a small minority of 2 respondents (4%) maintained a neutral stance on this statement.



2. Being a fan of K-Idol has made me learn some Korean words. ⁵⁰ responses

Figure 4.8 Being a fan of K-idol has made the respondents learn some Korean words

This statement assessed whether being fans of K-idols has influenced respondents' familiarity with Korean words. Among the 50 respondents, 29 (58%) expressed strong agreement that K-idols have influenced them in learning Korean words. Furthermore, 14 respondents (28%) also agreed with this statement, affirming the role of K-idols in improving their understanding of the Korean language. Conversely, 4 respondents (8%) maintained a neutral stance, while 3 (6%) disagreed, indicating that not all respondents perceive a strong connection between being a fan and language acquisition.



4.2.3 Being a fan of K-idol has made the respondents tend to try Korean cuisine

3. Being a fan of K-Idol has made me tend to try Korean cuisine (E.g., Kimchi, Tteokbokki,

Figure 4.9 Being a fan of K-idol has made the respondents tend to try Korean cuisine

This statement examined whether being fans of K-idols influences respondents' willingness to try Korean cuisine. The data shows a substantial trend, with 37 out of 50 respondents (74%) strongly agreeing that the K-idols have influenced them to explore Korean cuisine. Furthermore, 12 respondents (24%) expressed agreement with this statement. Interestingly, only 1 respondent (2%) held a differing opinion by disagreeing with the statement. 4.2.4 Being a fan of K-idol has made the respondents recognise most of the K-idol from other groups



4. Being a fan of K-Idol has made me recognise most of the K-Idol from other groups. ⁵⁰ responses

Figure 4.10 Being a fan of K-idol has made the respondents recognise most of the K-idol from other groups

This statement examined the potential influence of being K-idol fans on respondents' capacity to identify other K-idol groups. The data highlights that 24 out of 50 respondents (48%) strongly agreed that being a fan of K-idol assists them in recognizing various K-idol groups. Additionally, 20 respondents (40%) expressed their agreement with this statement. Conversely, 3 respondents (6%) remain neutral on the matter, while another 3 respondents (6%) disagree with this statement. Within these responses, it's evident that more than half of the respondents are inclined to acknowledge that being a fan of K-idols may influence their improved recognition of different K-idol groups.



4.2.5 Being a fan of K-idol has made the respondents learn from K-idol's fashion style

Figure 4.11 Being a fan of K-idol has made the respondents learn from the K-idol fashion style

The findings of this statement highlight a significant pattern in how K-idols exert an influence on the fashion choices of the respondents. 20 respondents (40%) strongly agreed that their fashion style is learned from K-idols, while an even larger group of 23 respondents (46%) expressed their agreement with this statement. This substantial consensus among the respondents shows the presence of a strong connection between their fashion preferences and the impact of K-idols. It indicates that K-idols' appearances and attire resonate deeply with these individuals, serving as a source of inspiration for integrating similar fashion elements into their personal style. The 7 respondents (14%) who maintain a neutral stance.



4.2.6 Being a fan of K-idol has increased the desire of respondents to travel to Korea

6. Being a fan of K-Idol has increased my desire to travel to Korea.

Figure 4.12 Being a fan of K-idol has increased the desire of the respondents to travel to Korea

The findings of this statement highlight a prominent trend regarding the influence of Kidols on respondents' desire to travel to Korea. A significant majority, constituting 68% of the respondents, strongly agree that being a fan of K-idols has grown their desire to travel to Korea. Additionally, 20% of respondents expressed agreement with this statement. A smaller segment maintains a neutral standpoint (2%), while a minority disagrees (8%). These findings show the substantial impact that K-idols wield in kindling individuals' interest in visiting Korea. This connection underscores the considerable influence of K-idols in shaping perceptions and aspirations, particularly in the context of travel and cultural exploration.



4.2.7 Being a fan of K-idol has increased the respondents' knowledge of K-cultures

7. Being a fan of K-Idol has increased my knowledge of K-cultures.

Figure 4.13 Being a fan of K-idol has increased the respondents' knowledge of K-cultures

The findings of this statement highlight a prominent trend regarding the influence of Kidols on respondents' understanding of K-culture. Among the respondents, 28 individuals (56%) expressed a strong agreement that K-idols significantly enrich their understanding of K-cultures, while an additional 16 respondents (32%) agreed with this statement. This shows that a substantial segment of the respondents acknowledges a meaningful correlation between K-idols and their knowledge of K-culture. This widespread agreement demonstrates that K-idols are good at sharing cultural knowledge, going beyond just being entertainers. The fact that 6 respondents (12%) adopt a neutral position in this matter emphasises the diversity of viewpoints.

4.3 Section C: The Perception of Malaysian University Students toward K-culture

Section C of the survey included a total of 8 items. The second objective of this research is focused on evaluating the perceptions of Malaysian university students regarding K-culture. To fulfil this objective, the construction of this section was aimed at gaining insights into the viewpoints held by Malaysian university students towards K-culture.

4.3.1 K-cuisine is more delicious than other cuisines



1. K-cuisine is more delicious than other cuisines.

Figure 4.14 K-cuisine is more delicious than other cuisines

Figure 4.14 presents an overview of the perceptions held by respondents in relation to Kcuisine. 16 respondents (32%) affirmed their agreement with the statement, while 14 respondents (28%) assumed a neutral standpoint. Interestingly, 10 respondents (20%) expressed strong agreement, indicating a notable conviction that K-Cuisine offers a superior gustatory experience compared to other culinary options. However, a contrasting viewpoint was held by 9 respondents

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(18%), who expressed disagreement. Notably, 1 respondent (2%) articulated a strong disagreement with the statement.

4.3.2 K-pop music espouses more morals and values



2. K-pop music espouses more morals and values. 50 responses

Figure 4.15 K-pop music espouses more morals and values

Figure 4.15 provides insight into the perspectives of respondents concerning the extent to which K-pop music reflects moral and ethical values. Among the respondents, 19 respondents (38%) concurred with the statement, signifying their belief that K-pop music is imbued with moral and value-oriented content. Interestingly, a significant number of 16 respondents (32%) stand neutral viewpoint. Additionally, 4 respondents (8%) strongly agreed with the statement, indicating a clear alignment with this statement. On the other hand, 10 respondents (20%) held a different viewpoint, suggesting an opposing perspective. Only one respondent (2%) strongly disagreed with the idea.

4.3.3 K-drama and K-movie stories are more interesting than others



3. K-drama and K-movie stories are more interesting than others. ⁵⁰ responses

Figure 4.16 K-drama and K-movie stories are more interesting than others

Figure 4.16 provides insight into how respondents perceive the entertainment value of Kdrama and K-movie narratives compared to other forms of storytelling. Among the respondents, 22 (44%) expressed their agreement with this idea, indicating a preference for the captivating nature of K-drama and K-movie stories. Furthermore, 17 respondents (34%) strongly agree with this statement. In contrast, 5 respondents (10%) held a different view, suggesting that K-drama and K-movie stories may not inherently be more interesting than alternative narratives. Another 2 (4%) respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, revealing a strong difference in their opinion. Additionally, 4 (8%) respondents took a neutral stand on this statement. Overall, the responses indicate a prevailing inclination towards perceiving K-drama and K-movie narratives as entertaining. 4.3.4 K-beauty brands such as Etude House and Innisfree are more attractive to buy compared to



4. K-beauty brands such as Etude House and Innisfree are more attractive to buy compared to other brands.





Figure 4.17 K-beauty brands such as Etude House and Innisfree are more attractive to buy compared to other brands

Figure 4.17 shows the perceptions of respondents regarding the attractiveness of K-beauty brands compared to other brands. 23 (46%) respondents expressed agreement with the statement, indicating their belief that K-beauty brands hold a greater allure for purchase compared to other brands. A notable proportion, 8 (16%) respondents, strongly agreed with this perspective, signifying a firm alignment with the notion. In contrast, 9 (18%) respondents held a neutral stance on the matter, while an equal number of 9 (18%) respondents expressed disagreement. Notably, 1 (2%) respondent strongly disagreed with the statement.

4.3.5 K-fashion more closely resembles my aesthetic tastes



5. K-fashion more closely resembles my aesthetic tastes. 50 responses

Figure 4.18 K-fashion more closely resembles my aesthetic tastes

Figure 4.18 illustrates the perceptions of respondents regarding the alignment of K-fashion with their aesthetic preferences. 24 (48%) respondents expressed agreement with the statement, indicating that they believe K-fashion closely aligns with their personal aesthetic taste. Additionally, 15 (30%) respondents strongly agreed with this perspective, signifying a strong resonance with the notion. Conversely, 6 (12%) respondents held a neutral viewpoint, reflecting their uncertainty on the matter. 4 (8%) respondents expressed disagreement with the statement, while 1 (2%) respondent strongly disagreed with it.



4.3.6 K-culture is more fascinating than other cultures



6. K-Culture is more fascinating than other cultures.

50 responses

Figure 4.19 K-culture is more fascinating than other cultures

Figure 4.19 presents the perceptions of respondents regarding the comparative fascination of K-culture against other cultural contexts. 23 (46%) respondents agreed with the statement that K-culture holds greater fascination compared to other cultures. Moreover, 9 (18%) respondents strongly aligned with this viewpoint, signifying a pronounced resonance with the notion. On the other hand, 10 (20%) respondents expressed a neutral standpoint, reflecting their uncertainty on the matter. Conversely, 6 (12%) respondents expressed disagreement with the statement, while 2 (4%) respondents strongly disagreed.



4.3.7 K-culture is more interesting compared to Malaysian culture

7. K-Culture is more interesting compared to Malaysian culture. ⁵⁰ responses

Figure 4.20 K-culture is more interesting compared to Malaysian culture

Figure 4.20 illustrates the perceptions of respondents concerning the relative interest of Kculture compared to Malaysian culture. Among the 50 respondents, 16 (32%) respondents agreed that K-culture holds more interest than Malaysian culture, while 13 (26%) respondents strongly affirmed this perspective. In contrast, 15 (30%) respondents maintained a neutral viewpoint, indicating their uncertainty or lack of a clear preference on the matter. Conversely, 4 (8%) respondents disagreed with the statement, while 2 (4%) respondents strongly disagreed, suggesting a clear contrary viewpoint.



8. K-Culture has made me want to experience traditional Korean culture such as wearing HanBok

4.3.8 K-culture has made the respondents to experience traditional Korean culture

Figure 4.21 K-culture has made me want to experience traditional Korean culture

Figure 4.21 presents the perceptions of respondents regarding the influence of K-culture on their desire to experience traditional Korean cultural elements, such as wearing Hanbok. A substantial portion of 21 (42%) respondents strongly agreed that K-culture has ignited a desire within them to engage in traditional Korean cultural practices, including wearing Hanbok. This finding shows the profound impact of K-culture on influencing personal aspirations and interests. Moreover, 20 (40%) respondents expressed agreement with the statement, further reinforcing the trend of K-culture's influence on fostering an interest in traditional Korean experiences. Conversely, 5 (10%) respondents held a contrary perspective, indicating disagreement with the notion, while 2 (4%) respondents strongly disagreed. Additionally, 2 (4%) respondents maintained a neutral viewpoint.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the conclusions discuss the research's findings about the media's influence on K-idol perceptions among Malaysian university students, considering the research's objectives, research questions, and observed results, are presented. Additionally, the chapter explores the limitations and outlines potential directions for future research.

5.1 Discussion

5.1.1 University students' engagement with K-idol content

Gerbner's Cultivation Theory suggests that people who spend a lot of time watching media, usually more than four hours a day, are exposed to many different messages and content from the media. This continuous exposure can shape their beliefs and attitudes based on what they see. However, the data we have here presents an interesting finding: a significant number of respondents, 26 out of 50 respondents (which is 52%), spend only 1 to 4 hours each day engaging with K-idol content. According to Gerbner & Gross (1976), these individuals who spend less than 4 hours could be categorised as "light" viewers which doesn't align with Gerbner's definition of "heavy" viewers. These results go beyond what we've heard before, indicating that even people who spend less than 4 hours a day with media can still develop their beliefs and attitudes through this exposure.

On the other hand, 17 respondents (34%) dedicate more than 5 hours every day to engaging with K-idols. This pattern matches well with Cultivation Theory, as it includes individuals who consume media content for four hours or more each day, fitting the category of "heavy" viewers. Essentially, the data we're presenting here shows a nuanced balance between different levels of media consumption within the context of Cultivation Theory. Even though the group spending 1 to 4 hours daily doesn't exactly match the definition of "heavy" viewers, they still regularly expose themselves to K-idol content. This exposure, while not as extensive, has the potential to gradually influence their beliefs and attitudes, albeit in a more subtle way.

Next, YouTube is the preferred platform for K-idol video consumption, chosen by 47 (94%) of respondents. Instagram follows closely as the second most favoured platform for viewing K-idol videos, selected by 36 (72%) of respondents. This dual-platform preference indicates a diversification of content sources. Similarly, 33 (66%) of respondents use Instagram for K-idol live streaming, showcasing its role in real-time engagement alongside pre-recorded content. This discovery reinforces the conclusions drawn from Jin & Yoon's (2016) research, which emphasised the significant reliance of K-culture enthusiasts on popular social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. These platforms serve as crucial gateways for accessing a wide range of K-culture products and content. Moreover, these platforms provide a dynamic space for fans to actively engage with their favourite K-idols, ensuring they are up to date with the latest news and trends within the K-culture sphere. Additionally, they facilitate connections among fans who share similar interests, fostering a sense of community and camaraderie among K-culture

enthusiasts. This interconnectedness and accessibility afforded by social media platforms play a pivotal role in shaping and sustaining the global K-culture fandom.

In summary, our data challenges conventional notions of media consumption, revealing that a substantial portion of respondents, spending 1 to 4 hours daily with K-idol content, defies the typical "heavy" viewer label. Simultaneously, a significant group invests more than 5 hours daily, aligning with Cultivation Theory's criteria. YouTube takes the lead as the dominant platform for K-idol video consumption, closely pursued by Instagram. These platform preferences emphasise content source diversification and show the pivotal role of social media in shaping and connecting the global K-culture fandom. The research's findings illuminate the significance of social media in not only spreading but also sustaining the popularity of K-culture. These platforms have adeptly facilitated the effortless consumption and widespread sharing of Korean culture among K-culture enthusiasts, making an indispensable contribution to the global proliferation of K-culture.

5.1.2 University students' perceptions of K-idols

RO1: To analyse university students' perceptions of K-idols.

RQ1: What are the influences of K-idol towards K-culture?

The first research objective of this research is to analyse university students' perceptions of K-idols and understand the extent of their influence on various aspects of K-culture. The findings of this research reveal a noteworthy relationship between K-idols and university students' growing interest in different facets of K-culture. Based on the findings, more than half of the respondents

agree that being fans of K-idols has influenced various perspectives toward K-culture. To comprehend this influence better, according to the Cultivation Theory, as outlined by Gerbner & Gross (1976), which offers valuable insights into how extended exposure to K-idols through diverse media channels gradually shapes the beliefs and attitudes of university students. Even though most respondents in this research consume K-idol-related media content for 1 to 4 hours daily, falling short of Gerbner's definition of "heavy" viewers, it's evident that these students are significantly influenced by the messages and content they encounter. This observation aligns with Cultivation Theory, which posits that exposure to media content, including K-idol-related media, can gradually cultivate specific perceptions over time. In essence, even a relatively modest amount of exposure to such content can have a substantial impact, as seen in the findings of this research.

The current research found that most university students have experienced the influence of K-culture through the lens of being K-idol fans. These results are consistent with prior studies conducted by Bae et al. (2017), Sári (2018), Adlina et al. (2021), Chin et al. (2022), and Mohd Jenol et al. (2020). Collectively, these studies consistently demonstrate that continuous exposure to K-idols has a profound impact on shaping the perspectives of fans, particularly university students, towards K-culture. While these studies may have examined various aspects such as language acquisition, cultural exploration, or fashion influence, they collectively underscore the idea that K-idols wield a significant influence on multiple aspects of fans' lives, which aligns with Romer et al.'s (2014) argument that cultivation represents a gradual and enduring process, shaping individuals' views and convictions over time. This shows the concept that information gains greater accessibility and influence in shaping perceptions when individuals are continuously and

consistently exposed to it through various means, including hearing, reading, watching, or experiencing. This convergence across multiple studies shows the strong and multifaceted relationship between K-idols and the cultivation of perceptions among university students, reinforcing the idea that K-culture is a complex phenomenon significantly influenced by K-idol fandom.

Another important finding was that the influence of K-idols on university students has farreaching implications for cultural exchange and globalisation. The findings show that being a fan of K-idol has increased their knowledge of K-culture which 44 (88%) respondents agreed with. This finding, in line with the research conducted by Saeji (2022), shows the crucial role played by K-idols in the global entertainment industry as representatives of K-culture. Their influence transcends personal preferences and exerts a tangible influence on global cultural trends. As indicated by the research findings, the influence of K-idols is evident in fans' language acquisition, their ability to recognize different K-idol groups, and their adoption of fashion trends inspired by these idols. This phenomenon underscores the soft power of K-culture, fostering connections and mutual understanding among individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Therefore, this research demonstrates that students who consume a lot of K-idol media content are more likely to be influenced by K-culture. K-idols have a significant impact on promoting K-culture, as their content is widely shared on platforms like social media, which aligns with the cultivation theory used in this research, shaping students' perceptions by regular exposure to the K-idol media content.

5.1.3 Influence of perceptions on university students' views toward K-culture

RO2: To examine the influence of these perceptions on university students' views toward K-culture. RQ2: What are the perceptions of Malaysian university students toward K-culture?

The second research objective of this research is to examine how these perceptions influence university students' perspectives on K-culture. The question of the perceptions of Malaysian university students toward K-culture has revealed compelling insights that directly align with our research objectives. Most of the findings indicate a significant impact on Malaysian university students regarding K-culture. A substantial proportion of the respondents, over half, express agreement that various facets of K-culture, including cuisine, music, drama, movies, beauty brands, and fashion, hold a greater allure when compared to other cultural elements. Notably, 29 (58%) of the respondents concur that K-culture holds a more significant interest for them compared to their own Malaysian culture. These findings offer compelling evidence that regular exposure to K-idol media content plays a pivotal role in shaping the perceptions of Malaysian university students regarding K-culture.

Showkat (2017) highlighted the connection between media and culture. It's clear that how media portrays cultural elements like music, fashion, food, and entertainment can significantly impact how people perceive and adopt those traditions. For example, when the media portrays a fashion style or music genre positively, it can influence people to embrace those styles or

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appreciate that type of music. This, also aligned with the cultivation theory, shows the significant role of media, including K-idol-related content, in shaping cultural perceptions and behaviours among university students who regularly consume this media. The media's positive representation of these aspects serves as a potent driving force, moulding their attitudes and behaviours, and ultimately fuelling their growing enthusiasm for K-culture.

Moreover, as pointed out by Betty (2017), the Korean Wave, mainly represented by Kidols, has had substantial effects on Malaysians. Betty's insights confirm our findings, showing that the Korean Wave has led Malaysians, including university students, to develop a liking for Korea, become more interested in South Korean culture and society, including language and studies, and even change their lifestyles and attitudes.

Furthermore, in today's media landscape, social media platforms play a vital role in shaping perceptions and spreading cultural values. As Tsay-Vogel et al. (2018) emphasised, social media has the power to influence how people see the world, serving as platforms where stories and values are shared with large audiences. K-idol-related content on social media platforms further amplifies the influence of K-idols on university students, offering a dynamic space for fans to interact with their favourite idols, share content, and stay updated on the latest trends in K-culture. These also can be answered by the cultivation theory, the more K-idol-related social media content consumed repeatedly by university student may influence on shaping their perception of K-culture.

To sum it up, these results highlight the significant influence of K-culture on people's perceptions, in line with the Cultivation Theory used in this research. Malaysian university students who have spent time-consuming K-idol media content have formed favourable views and attitudes towards Korean culture.

5.2 Limitation of Research

The findings of this research provide valuable insights into how K-idols and their media content influence the perceptions of Malaysian university students regarding K-culture. However, certain limitations affect the extent and applicability of these findings. Firstly, the research's sample size was relatively small, with 50 respondents. This could introduce some bias as respondents might have a specific interest in K-culture. Moreover, relying on self-reported data might lead to social desirability bias, where respondents provide answers, they think are socially acceptable, potentially affecting the accuracy of their responses. Secondly, the research mainly focuses on the perceptions of Malaysian university students without delving into broader cultural, societal, or regional factors that could shape these perceptions. Considering the cultural context is essential in understanding these views better. Additionally, the findings are based on a single point in time and may not capture any changes in perceptions and attitudes over time, as cultural trends evolve. In conclusion, while this research highlighted how K-idols and their media content impact Malaysian university students' perceptions of K-culture, these limitations should be considered when interpreting the results. Future studies in this field could address these limitations to gain a more detailed and nuanced understanding of the topic.

5.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Future research in the realm of K-idols, media content, and cultural perceptions among university students can benefit from several important suggestions to deepen and broaden the understanding of this topic. Firstly, a larger and more diverse group of university students should be explored by the researcher, to expand the participant pool to encompass students from various universities, regions, and cultural backgrounds within Malaysia will help a better understanding of how K-culture influences perceptions. Second, the researcher may choose to do future studies using a mixed-methods strategy that combines qualitative and quantitative research. This method can offer a deeper understanding of the complex connection between K-idols, media content, and cultural attitudes. For instance, focus groups and qualitative interviews can help us comprehend respondents' perspectives and provide insightful information on how influence works. Researchers may enhance the area and provide an expanded understanding of the complex interactions between K-culture and the perspectives of university students by using these recommendations.

5.4 Conclusion

The results of this research show the important roles of K-idols in spreading K-culture among Malaysian university students. Two important research objectives were effectively met by this research: (i) analysing university students' perception of K-idols, and (ii) examining how these perceptions impact their view of K-culture. University students are exposed to K-culture more frequently because of the increased time spent watching K-idol media. As a result, this may influence their views and behaviours toward K-culture. This research highlights the significance of K-idols as a medium for university students to shape and change their perceptions of K-culture.

Moreover, the research also highlighted that K-culture has a significant influence on Malaysian university students' perspectives. K-culture has influenced most of the respondents which has a far broader effect than just entertainment and affects their perceptions, including fashion, food, and beauty. This conclusion clearly shows that K-culture has a significant impact on Malaysian university students' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours.

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Appendix A 61

APPENDIX A

Section A: Demographic and Psychographic

- 1. Gender
 - Malay
 - Female
- 2. Education level
 - Pre-U
 - Diploma
 - Degree
 - Master
- 3. Ethnic
 - Malay
 - Chinese
 - Indian
 - Other
- 4. How many hours do you spend on K-Idol per day (E.g., Watching videos or live streaming)
 - Less than 1 hour
 - 1-4 hours
 - 5 10 hours
 - More than 10 hours
- 5. What's the platform on which you usually watch your favourite K-Idol video?

- YouTube
- Bilibili
- TikTok
- Instagram
- Facebook
- Twitter
- I don't watch any video
- 6. What platform do you usually watch your favourite K-Idol live streaming on?
 - Instagram
 - Weverse
 - I don't watch any live-streaming
 - Other

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Section B: The Influence of K-Idol toward K-Culture

[Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly agree]

- 1. Being a fan of K-Idol has made me understand some simple Korean languages.
- 2. Being a fan of K-Idol has made me learn some Korean words.
- 3. Being a fan of K-Idol has made me try Korean cuisine (E.g., Kimchi, Tteokbokki, Budaejigae).
- 4. Being a fan of a K-Idol has made me recognise most of the K-Idol from other groups.
- 5. Being a fan of a K-Idol has made me learn from the K-idol's fashion style.
- 6. Being a fan of K-Idol has increased my desire to travel to Korea.
- 7. Being a fan of K-Idol has increased my knowledge of K-cultures.

Section C: The perceptions of Malaysian university students toward K-Culture (including music, movie, drama, beauty, fashion, etc.)

[Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly agree]

- 1. K-cuisine is more delicious than other cuisines.
- 2. K-pop music espouses more morals and values.
- 3. K-drama and K-movie stories are more interesting than others.
- 4. K-beauty brands such as Etude House and Innisfree are more attractive to buy compared to others.
- 5. K-fashion more closely resembles my aesthetic tastes.
- 6. K-Culture is more fascinating than other cultures.
- 7. K-Culture is more interesting compared to Malaysian culture.
- 8. K-Culture has made me want to experience traditional Korean culture such as wearing HanBok.

APPENDIX B

Cultivation Theory: The effects of prolonged exposure to Kidol on impressions of K-culture among Malaysian university students

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