



K-POP IDOLIZATION INFLUENCE FANS' PURCHASE INTENTION

TAN KAIWEN

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TAN KAIWEN

Approval Form

This research paper attached hereto, entitled “K-pop Idolization influence fans’ purchase intention” prepared and submitted by Tan KaiWen in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Communication (Hons) Broadcasting is hereby accepted.

Date: 10th May 2024

Supervisor

Foo Mei Lee

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.

Name : Tan KaiWen

Student ID : 21UJB02641

Signed : *Tan*

Date : 5th May 2024

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Abstract

As the music industry grows, South Korea is one of the nations that is actively promoting its music abroad. The success of K-pop can be seen when people have come to recognize K-pop culture as their own unique cultural identity especially youths are more easily influenced by K-pop. There is evident from several fan support activities that their idol has holds a particular place in the fandom as many K-pop fans loyal to their idol and start consuming many merchandise or product related to their idol. Therefore, this study will be focusing on how the K-pop idolization influence fans' purchasing intention and the factors lies within it. This study is being carried out by using quantitative method and the data is gathered by using online survey questionnaire. The questionnaire is obtained from a total of 120 respondents who aged between 18 to 26 years old in Malaysia. Following that, the quantitative data will be statistically analysed to determine how the K-pop idolization influence fans' purchasing intention and the factors lies within it. The findings show that fans' engagement in spending on merchandise is motivated by their deep emotional attachment to K-pop idols as well as the attractiveness of their persona and appearance. Additionally, social media presence and promotional activities further strengthen fans' willingness to support their favourite K-pop idol by purchasing their merchandise. With this study, industry stakeholders could have an in-depth awareness of these dynamics to optimize marketing tactics and meet the varied requirements and preferences of K-pop fans.

Keywords: K-pop, K-pop idol, Factors, Relationship, Purchase Intention

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Introduction

The research on how K-pop idolization influence fans' purchase intention is presented in this chapter. This study aims to determine the factors that influence fans' purchasing intention and the relationship that exists between K-pop idolization and fans' purchase intentions. This chapter covers the background of study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, significant of study, and key definition concepts.

1.1 Background of Study

As the music industry is currently growing quickly, South Korea is one of the nations that is actively promoting its music abroad. The country has gained widespread recognition from listeners worldwide which proving that K-Pop is not just popular in East and Southeast Asian local and regional markets but also on the international stage (Boman, 2019). According to Andira & Prasetyo (2023), the term “K-pop” or “Korean Wave”, sometimes referred to as “Hallyu”, it describes the astounding spread of Korean popular culture, encompassing everything from online gaming and cuisine to music, movies and dramas. Since mainstream Korean television series and music were presented in the 2010s, Hallyu has become increasingly famous worldwide, contributing to the rise in popularity of Korean culture in the late 2000s and early 2010s. All genders and age groups are impacted by the Korean wave, but the younger generation which made up 50% of all internet users globally in 2019 is the group most affected (Tiara & Gunadi, 2022).

The success of K-pop can be seen when people have come to recognize K-pop culture as their own unique cultural identity especially youths are more easily influenced by K-pop. The consequences become evident when admiration for K-pop culture, especially for its idols, becomes an obsession (Kamarolzaman et al., 2022). As we can see nowadays, there are several K-pop dance cover competitions taking place all over the place. These competitions draw a large number of K-pop dance enthusiasts who enter and perform to their favourite idol song. According to Wang (2022), K-pop idols are defined as people who are well-known for being celebrities whose stage appearance focus on singing, dancing, acting, promote, model, and advertise. There are many K-pop idol groups such as BTS, BlackPink, New Jeans, NCT, Stray Kids are from different music labels including HYBE Corporation, YG Entertainment, JYP Entertainment and SM Entertainment. These K-pop idol groups are extremely well-known and gained sizable global fan bases all over the world.

Furthermore, the globalization of South Korea's pop culture is having an effect on the cosmetics and fashion industries as well (Anuar, 2023). Many fashion brands showcasing Korean celebrities in their campaigns, demonstrating the widespread influence of the Hallyu trend (Malaysia, 2023). One of the example is that it was revealed that JungKook of BTS will serve as Calvin Klein's global ambassador in March (Sesoko, 2023). Advertisers use celebrity appeal as Brand Ambassadors to reach their target audiences quite well. Purchase intention will then result from customers' desire for a thing as a result of their observation and learning processes about it. Purchase intentions and brand ambassadors have a one-way interaction in which using brand ambassadors will increase consumers' intent to buy (Rosalina & Ngantung, 2022).

According to a study by Andira and Prasetyo (2023), every K-Pop fan would purchase item that are related to their idols such as concert tickets, merchandise and

music albums. They are driven to purchase their idol albums or merchandise because they consider it appropriate or even necessary to express their love for them (Lestari & Tiarawati, 2020). Merchandise is not only limited to the music album, but also including light stick, photocards, posters, stickers, accessories and so on. In addition to idol merchandise, fans will also purchase products endorsed by idols as a way of showing support for their favourite idols such as cosmetics, clothing brands or even food.

According to Desnika and Tambunan (2023), there are some online media articles stated that K-pop idol photocards are sold for astronomically high prices. For instance, Jungkook of BTS photocard sold for 10,000,000 IDR (RM3030.97), while another version of photocard, Butterfly Lucky Even, was sold for an even higher price of 49,000,000 IDR (RM14851.77). Not only that, K-pop fans would show their love and support when their idol release new song by shattering the record for the most album sales, both digital and physical (Irena et al., 2022). As a result, the 2020 Album Chart lists BTS's fourth studio album, MAP OF THE SOUL_7, as having achieved the highest amount of 4,376,975 physical album sales. It was the data based on album sales provided by the Korean Music Content Association through the Gaon Music Chart (Irena et al., 2022). It drawing innumerable fans willing to spend their money to buy their favourite idols' music album. They have put in effort and money to stream videos, buy digital music and other activities (Chenyue, 2023).

South Korea has had success selling its products related to popular culture abroad. K-pop fans would experience pleasure and happiness after consuming these products (Desnika & Tambunan, 2023). Based on Damayanthi (2023) suggest that behavioural control, attitudes and subjective norms are significant factors that determine K-pop fans' intention to purchase the merchandise. Through the emotional

connecting, Korean wave has motivated its passionate supporters to make repeat purchases and has broadened the scope of its customer base through planned worldwide growth (Chenyue, 2023).

1.2 Problem Statement

According to Chenyue (2023), K-pop idols have their own fan groups that are united under the group name and have distinct colours all around the world. For instance, “STAY” is the fandom name for Stray Kids. Naturally, “STAY” is just “Stray” without the “r” and since “r” stands for reason in the word “Stray”, their fans are both their reason and their place of residence (Koreaboo, 2022). Other than this, there are still a lot of fandom for others K-pop idol such as “BLINK” for BlackPink, “ARMY” for BTS, “ONCE” for Twice and many more. In order to join the fan club, fans need to register and pay for register fee to become the member of the fan club. Therefore, they will get to receive latest update about their favourite idol and show support to them.

Furthermore, there is evident from several fan support activities that their idol has holds a particular place in the fandom as many K-pop fans loyal to their idol and start consuming many merchandise or product related to their idol. However, according to Heun (2023), he stated that major entertainment organizations in Korea such as HYBE, SM, YG and JYP are being investigated by the country’s antitrust office for allegedly engaging in unfair trade practices concerning the sales of K-pop CDs and photocards which mean that K-pop fans frequently need to purchase numerous albums in order to obtain particular photocards and some of which can fetch hefty prices on internet resale sites. This behaviour will affect the intention of K-pop fans to spend a lot of money purchasing more albums to obtain the photocards they want.

Other than music album and photocards, there are also many other product and service such as poster, light stick, fan meeting, concert. Not only the merchandise and product owned by idols' music label but also including product endorsed by idol or as ambassador for certain brand such as cosmetic product, clothing brand and so on. K-pop fans would feel pleasure and satisfy when they purchase the merchandise (Desnika & Tambunan, 2023). But the only issue is that they have spent a significant amount of money on their idol. Therefore, it is important to understand what is the factor that influence fans' purchasing intention on K-pop idol and the relationship between K-pop idol and fans' purchasing intention. Not only that, in previous study, there is also lack of this research study in Malaysia as many are focus on other countries. Hence, this study would more focus on the K-pop fandom in Malaysia.

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To identify the factors that influence fans' purchasing intention through K-pop Idolization.
2. To identify the relationship between K-pop Idolization and fans' purchasing intention.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the factors that influence fans' purchasing intention through K-pop Idolization?
2. What is the relationship between K-pop Idolization and fans' purchasing intention?

1.5 Significant of Study

Understanding the complex relationships between fans' idolization and their purchase intentions is essential as K-pop's popularity expands abroad for a number of reasons. This study provides the insight for the topic of K-pop idolization influence fans' purchasing intention. It aims to find out the factor that affect the purchasing intention of fans by K-pop idol. This study will be beneficial to the marketer, K-pop fans, students and researchers.

This study would identify the factors that is affecting the fans' purchasing intention on purchasing their idols' merchandise and product. It would study how K-pop idol can boost the purchasing intention of their fans for merchandise. The marketing strategies employed by those entertainment companies would be study in this research to provide an insight on how the companies use K-pop idol as a product to promote them in order to earn profit from their fans. Marketing strategies such as celebrity endorsement, social media engagement, fan meeting, concert, roadshow and more are the method to let the fans stay connection with the idol. Besides, the result of the study could also help marketer or even the global entertainment industry to enhance the brand loyalty and increase their sales. They can also figure out the potential influences on K-pop fans' intentions to purchase and to understand the wants of the fan base.

Furthermore, this study could help K-pop fans to get more understanding about the potential factors that would affect them on their purchasing intention towards the merchandise of their favourite K-pop idol. The research finding will show what is the factors that affecting their purchasing intention and the reason they intend to spend a lot of money as a way to show they love and support to their favourite idol. Moreover,

K-pop fans would also get to realize there are so many things they have spent money on to support for their idol such as music album, concert ticket, photocards and more.

Lastly, this study would benefit both students and researchers in the related fields. The research finding could let students and researchers who are interested to understand about the factors that influence the purchasing intention of K-pop fans towards K-pop idol. This study can serve as a guide for them to do research on related topic in the future as there are lack of research which is focus on Malaysia but mostly focus on other countries such as Indonesia and Philippine. The research finding can also provide to them as a reference if it is needed for their research related to purchasing intention and K-pop.

1.6 Key Definition Concept

To better understand some of the terms used in this study, the definitions of the following terms are provided:

K-pop

According to Williams & Ho (2015), K-pop is a music cultural phenomenon known as the “Hallyu” which involves the deliberate dissemination of Korean popular music outside of Korea to a global audience. The 21st-century music genre that is globally popular, aesthetic-driven, style-bending, and trend-setting is known as K-pop. K-pop, which has its roots in South Korea, is influenced by a variety of musical styles, including dance, pop, electronic, rock, hip-hop, R&B, and experimental (Arnaud, 2023).

K-pop Idol

Wang (2022) defined K-pop idols are well-known for being celebrities whose stage appearance focus on singing, dancing, acting, promote, model, and advertise. They could be a solo artist or part of one of the countless boy groups or girl groups in the genre. K-pop idol are products of hyper-manufactured system that Korean music labels devised to produce K-pop stars (Slang.net, 2021).

Purchasing Intention

According to Cuofano (2023), the degree to which a consumer intends to carry out a certain action or decide whether to buy a good or service is measured by their purchasing intention. It is also a term used to describe the reasoning behind a consumer's choice to purchase a specific brand (Shah et al., 2012).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the relationship between Korean Idolization and its influence on purchasing intention, specifically within the context of K-pop (Korean Popular Music). We will explore the evolution of K-pop, its global influence, fan culture (Fandom), and the impact of social media. Additionally, this chapter will delve into K-pop idolization and the phenomenon of celebrity endorsement within the context of K-pop purchasing intention. This includes an analysis of K-pop Fan Culture and its role in shaping consumer behaviour and attitudes towards K-pop merchandise.

2.1 K-pop (Korean Popular Music)

K-pop, also known as Korean Popular Music, is a musical style which encompasses diverse genres such as rock, hip hop, and electronic music (Master Class, 2021). In recent years, K-pop's reach has extended far beyond Korea's borders. K-pop has achieved levels of success internationally, with millions of fans spanning across continents. The popularity of K-pop has expanded beyond East Asia and is growing in Europe, North and South America, and Africa (Kim et al., 2022). In a 2023 survey conducted by Statista Research Department (2024) across 26 countries, approximately half which is nearly 50 percent of the respondents reported that the genre K-pop was "very popular" in their country. According to Statista, they also pointed out that K-pop had reached a level of popularity where it was widely recognized by the general public, and related products were being sold (Statista Research Department, 2024). The concept of K-pop can trace back to the 1950s and have been shaped by various Western music styles and pop bands. American pop culture, in particular, has played a

significant role in influencing and shaping the landscape of K-pop. John Lie (2012) pointed out that K-pop is so popular in this era because a large number of people are attracted to American-influenced pop music, providing catchy rhythm and lyrics (John Lie, 2012).

According to the research of K-pop history, the first generation of K-pop was led by Seo Taiji and Boys, HOT SECHSKIES, S.E.S, Fin.K.L and Shinhwa. They were the pioneers of K-pop, fusing Korean and American music to create a new sound that laid the foundation for today's K-pop industry (Arnaud, 2021). The second generation, which included TVXQ, Super Junior, Girls' Generation which focused on catchy melodies rather than lyrics, marked the golden age of K-Pop from 2005 to 2011. The third generation, from 2012 to 2017, saw K-pop reach the mainstream such as BTS, EXO, Seventeen and BLACKPINK broke into international markets outside of China, Japan and the United States which has marked success expanded globally. This era was characterized by a variety of musical styles and complex concepts. PSY's "Gangnam Style" gained global recognition in third-generation K-pop. Gangnam Style's music video was the first video on YouTube to reach 1 billion views and broke YouTube's viewing limit, prompting the view counter to be upgraded. It even surpassed Justin Bieber's "Baby" to become the second most viewed video on YouTube, with over 1 billion views (BBC News, 2014). The fourth generation started in 2018 and introduced virtual or artificial intelligence idols such as MAVE and Plave, as well as groups such as Stray Kids, (G)I-DLE, ENHYPEN, AESPA, NewJeans etc. Notably, fashion and makeup are becoming more and more experimental in this generation (VERMA, 2023).

In this era, there is a phenomenon of various artists who have collaborated and created a series of hits internationally. This has allowed them to understand each other's attributes and ideas, leading to more efficient music production and authentic music

(Parc & Kim, 2020). As a result, the trendy music style familiar to international audiences has become more accessible through cross-genre inclusion. Interestingly, K-pop has tended to utilize English or Mix Language in their lyrics recently. Various K-pop artists frequently use English lyrics, reflecting the newest global trends, and complex acoustics. For instance, BTS, also known as the Bangtan Boys, is a South Korean boy band that releases a few songs featuring entirely English lyrics such as *Dynamite*, *Permission to Dance*, *Butter*, etc (BTS Wiki Fandom, 2023).

The trend of hybrid lyrics in Korean pop music reflects the fusion of Western and Eastern influences, reflected in the use of English in lyrics, the incorporation of American pop styles, and the adoption of Western modernity (Jin & Ryoo, 2012). Catchy hook songs that repeat motifs are memorable and easy to sing along with, even for listeners who do not know the Korean language. This trend highlights the interesting blend of multilingual elements in contemporary K-pop, illustrating how local and global cultural forces intersect in the field of popular music, especially in the context of economic globalization.

In recent years, K-pop is gaining more recognition and popularity internationally with each passing year. For instance, Blackpink made history as the first K-pop girl group to grace the stage at Coachella, the renowned annual music festival held in California. Not only did they make an appearance, but they also took centre stage as one of the main acts on the festival's opening day. This marked a significant milestone not only for Blackpink but also for the K-pop industry as a whole, as it showcased the global appeal and influence of K-pop music on the international stage. According to Billboard, the video of Blackpink performing in Coachella has received 56.7 million views on its first day and exceeded 100 million views in less than three

days. It also achieved a whopping peak of 979,000 simultaneous viewers, breaking a record at the time (Chan, 2024). In terms of recognition from international organizations, K-pop has consistently made history through its connections and achievements. BTS, one of the most popular Korean bands globally, boasts over 74.7 million followers on Instagram. They made history as the first K-pop band to address the United Nations, collaborating with the UN on awareness and fundraising campaigns (Wang, 2018). In 2017, BTS partnered with the Korean Committee for UNICEF to establish Love Myself, which supports UNICEF's global #ENDviolence campaign against violence towards youth. Additionally, Seventeen made history as the first K-pop group to deliver a speech at the 13th edition of the UNESCO Youth Forum. The session focused on how education and solidarity among youth can contribute to a better future and promote positivity (N. S. T. Entertainment, 2023).

2.2 Idolization

According to Cambridge Dictionary (2022), "Idolization" is defined as an action of admiring or respecting someone (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022). It is also an action of admiring someone strongly. Idols can hold significant importance in the lives of adolescents. The significance of idolization lies in its connection to popular media and its impact on adolescents' lives. Idolization not only reflects adolescents' purchasing power and their roles in the entertainment industry but also influences societal efforts to protect youth from powerful influences.

Raviv et al. (1996) research investigates how adolescents idolize pop singers. It compares male and female adolescents regarding the intensity of idolization, its

behavioural expressions, reasons for choosing idols, and reliance on idols for knowledge. Self-reported data showed that idolization, particularly in worshiping and modelling, is strongest in the youngest age group and diminishes with age. Additionally, girls tend to idolize singers more than boys. Based on demographic data collected by Marsanna Harris (2021) from Twitter and Instagram, the average K-pop enthusiast is around 23 years old, with a majority being female. Studies indicate that a considerable number of K-pop fans are aged 18 and above, with different research highlighting either the under-18 group or the 18-to-25 age bracket as the largest segments in the sampling of Malaysia adolescent (Harris, 2022). Particularly, girls from the youngest age group rely on singers for personal knowledge. These findings are interpreted within the contexts of gender disparities, adolescent traits, and the development of youth culture.

Teenage admiration for pop stars has distinct features. Firstly, the act of listening to this music is often far between by age, making it sometimes beyond parental control. This provides avenues for self-expression, the construction of self-identity, and lays the foundation for achieving independence and closeness. According to Thakkar and Lortie (2020), The primary need of a teenager is to feel understood and fully supported (Thakkar & Lortie, 2020). The existence of an idol is someone who can provide inspiration for life, empowering messages, and emotional support. Fans need for understanding and support: Adolescents crave understanding and support as they navigate through the challenges of adolescence. This need stems from the desire to feel validated and accepted. A teenager might seek understanding and support from their parents when facing academic pressures or relationship issues.

According to Nurul Aini Safithri et al. (2020), participants who are fans of K-Pop celebrities report a high quality of life across four dimensions: physical health, psychological, social relations, and environment. Their admiration for K-Pop idols

stems from the belief that these idols inspire them to improve (Nurul Aini Safithri et al., 2020). The process of idolizing celebrities as role models aligns closely with modelling theory and plays a role in identity formation. Additionally, participants at a borderline pathological level of admiration may be influenced by the K-Pop celebrities they idolize. This positive correlation between being a fan of K-Pop celebrities and quality of life corresponds with the prevalent phenomenon among adolescents who claim that idolizing K-Pop idols contributes to their personal growth, particularly in terms of mental well-being.

2.2.1 K-pop Idolization

According to Lakes Media Music News (2021), UNICEF announced that since the launch of the "Love Myself" campaign in 2017, it has raised \$3.6 million to support UNICEF's work, generated nearly five million tweets, and inspired over 50 million engagements. UNICEF stated in a new report on mental health that the campaign was initiated to reach young people and improve their lives and rights, as quoted by BTS. According to UNICEF's flagship report, a comprehensive approach is needed to promote good mental health for every child, which includes commitment, communication, and action. The report emphasizes the importance of protecting vulnerable children and providing support to those facing the greatest challenges (UNICEF, 2021).

Music serves as another mode of communication with a unique ability to unite people and convey a wide range of emotions. Whether through collaborative music-making or shared listening experiences in everyday situations, it weaves a rich tapestry of emotions, connecting individuals on a deeper level (Izen et al., 2023). Hence, the meaningful lyrics of BTS's songs demonstrate that music serves as a powerful

communication tool to help people to face their challenges in their daily lives. Wylie (2021) reported that BTS celebrated the ground-breaking success of the LOVE MYSELF campaign, which has reached nearly every country in the world with positive messages of self-love and self-care. UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore praised BTS for their unprecedented impact on spreading a positive message with their ARMY, stating that their contribution is invaluable.

Not only BTS, many musicians like Amber Liu from K-pop group F(X) find that a significant part of her journey of self-discovery is expressed through her music (ANDRE NEVELING, 2024). According to Crystal Bell from MTV news (2019). Another male group which is Seventeen also revealed that their goal of creating music is more about becoming the kind of people who constantly reflect on our past experiences and isn't aiming to convey a singular story through their music rather, they are trying to tell a unique story through their music.. Both Liu and S.Coups emphasize the journey of self-discovery through music. Liu, like many musicians, sees her music as a means to express her personal growth and experimentation with different genres. Similarly, S.Coups from Seventeen highlights that their music is not about conveying a singular story but rather about their growth as individuals and artists. They aim to constantly reflect on their past experiences and discover new aspects of themselves, sharing these with their fans. Hence, fans often look up to musicians not only for their talent but also for the personal journeys they share through their music. Fans may relate to and find inspiration in the artists' exploration of identity and growth, fostering a deeper connection with them.

According to Emma Young (2023), the researcher points out that the trends in South Korea contrast with trends found in the UK and US, where there has been a decrease in positive emotion and an increase in negative emotion in music lyrics (Emma

Young, 2023). Researchers use changes in the lyrics of hit songs to track emotional changes within a population and track emotional changes within a population by analysing shifts in the lyrics of popular songs. A study of K-pop songs from 1990 to 2019 revealed a trend towards increased positivity and decreased negativity in emotional content, mirroring changes in South Korean society.

According to Interiano et al. (2018), researchers have analysed the trends observed in the UK and US. A study analysing over half a million songs released in the UK from 1985 to 2015 identified a decline in 'happiness', although successful songs tended to be more positive than less successful ones (Interiano et al., 2018). Similarly, an examination of the lyrics of popular pop songs in the US from 1980 to 2007 revealed a decrease in positive emotion and a rise in angry or antisocial language. The study suggests that song lyrics are rich sources of data for tracking emotions and can provide insights into the cultural psyche of a population. Songs serve as reflectors of cultural psyche and the content of the song likely reflects the general mood of the crowd. Therefore, South Koreans appeared to feel more positive recently compared to 30 years ago, as reflected in the emotional content of K-pop songs. Through their admiration for pop stars, teenagers find inspiration, empowerment, and connection, which are essential elements in their journey toward self-discovery and personal growth.

2.3 Fan Culture (Fandom)

Fandom, defined as the state or identity of being a fan of someone or something, especially a very enthusiastic one (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.) while the fan is defined as an individual who is a supporter to admirer of something such as the celebrity, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary (Merriam Webster, n.d.). According to Lee and Nguyen (2020), "fan" is originally derived from "fanatic" and first appeared

in a religious context in England in the late 17th century as it was used to describe passionate sports fans and later evolved to cover devoted audiences of movies and recorded music.

The difference between being a fan and being in a fandom is about the level of involvement with the object of admiration. Fans may enjoy the work or performances of their favourite artists, teams, or performers, but their engagement is typically passive which may not actively participate in fan communities or engage in fan-related activities (Fuschillo, 2018). On the contrary, Fandom refers to a community of enthusiastic people who share a common interest in a particular celebrity. Fandom usually involves active participation and engagement with the object of admiration who has the same interest or bias. There may be various activities or events which enhance the engagement in discussions on social media or fan forums. Participatory culture is the main focus in the most fan cultures, including sports fans and fans of music groups. For example, in the context of Film Fandom, individuals may participate in online discussions and post on sites like the Internet Movie Database (imdb.com). They may also join film clubs or groups (Schirmer Encyclopedia of Film, 2024). They aim to share the experience with others who have similar appreciation for them.

There is different type of fandom community in this world such as a television series, film franchise, book series, video game, or music group. These communities having common interest towards individual, brand, public figure, television series, music, film, literary work, or any other entertainment medium (Later, n.d.). These communities play a significant role in promoting the careers of artists by supporting the activities that relate to their bias. Several music fandoms have gained popularity, including Beliebers (fans of Justin Bieber), Swifties (fans of Taylor Swift), and The Barbz (followers of Nicki Minaj). In the realm of K-pop fandom, some well-known

fandoms include EXO-L (fans of EXO), ARMY (fans of BTS), BLINKS (fans of Blackpink), and many others (Renaissance, 2023).

In the fandom world of this culture, fandoms also have their categories, with differences assigned to each level. David's hierarchy of lead provides a framework for understanding different levels of fandom, from non-fans to superfans which as shown in Figure 2.1 (DAVID RYAN OLSON, 2022). According to David's definition of fans at all levels, non-fans are people who have little to no interest in the object of fandom. Casual fans may occasionally listen to a few songs or attend a show, but their involvement is at a surface-level. True fans actively care about artists by supporting crowdfunding campaigns, while Superfans are at the top of the fandom. They are willing to travel long distances to see shows, make large donations, or leverage their networks to create opportunities to support the artists.

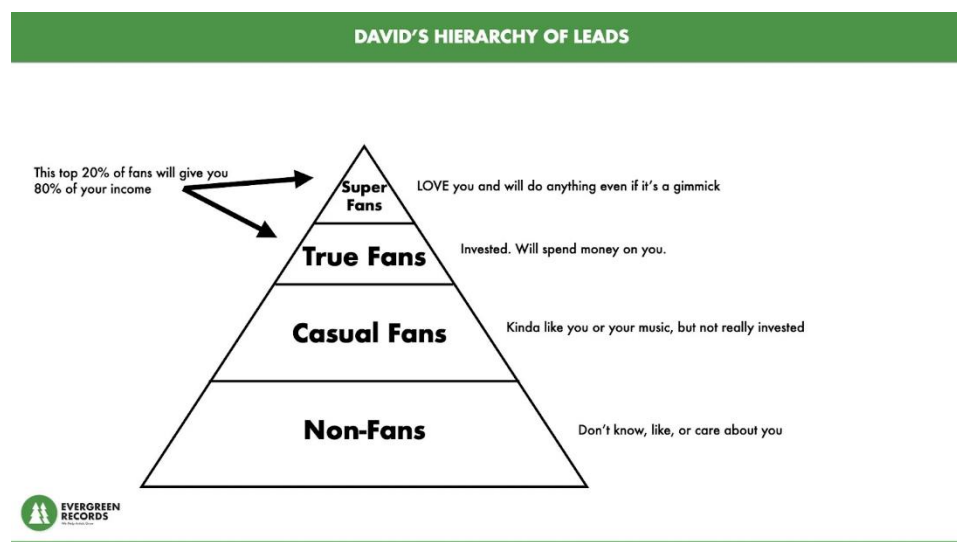


Figure 2.1: David's Hierarchy of Leads (The 4 Levels of Fandom)

2.3.1 K-pop Fan Culture

K-pop fandom has identified various categories or types of fans based on their behaviours, preferences, and level of involvement within the fandom. In a survey (2023) conducted by K-pop Radar about Korean fans distinguishing between being a dedicated fan of just one K-Pop artist versus multiple artists, a larger proportion of Korean fans identified as single group-stans which comprising 60% of respondents out of 1000 fans, while a significantly smaller percentage of approximately 25%, of international fans identified as single-stans. Consequently, only 40% of Korean fans identified as multi-stans, compared to about 75% of international fans (Koreaboo, 2023). These categories reflect the diversity within the K-pop fanbase, with each group demonstrating unique characteristics and patterns of engagement with their favourite idols.

Interestingly, the solo fans will be easily confused with the term Akgae, an "Akgae" is a fan who only supports one idol within a group and may actively try to hate the other members and lead to fan wars. K-pop fans on Twitter can easily become triggered by social interactions, leading to cyberbullying (Menawati & Putri, 2023). Similarly, Kim Yeon-Jeong, Twitter's head of global K-pop partnerships, highlighted that Twitter has become the main platform for fans to access the latest news and content from top K-pop celebrities (Zi, 2020). Fandom-related activities occur on the popular web platform Twitter, forming the "Stan Twitter" community (Malik & Haidar, 2020). It is a platform where users from different areas are able to discuss and promote their bias or groups.

Nur Fatihah et al. also point out that when a solo stan, or Akgae, behaves in a way that creates tension within the fandom, attempts to "educate" them may be considered cyberbullying as they target a specific individual, potentially causing harm

without realizing it (Nur & Mohammad, 2023). According to Sahara et al. (2022), cyberbullying among K-Pop fans arises from competition within the fandom, leading to frustration within the group (Sandrila & Wahyunengsih, 2023). Opponents of solo stans may justify their actions because they see their behaviour as wrong. Similarly, while Sasaeng fans' activities are already wrong, spreading personal information about them should not be justified as a means of protecting favourite idols. According to the researcher's objectives, cyberbullying behaviours on Twitter among K-pop fans in Malaysia have become normalized, with various common types of cyberbullying observed. Thus, the Akgae phenomenon has emerged as a toxic aspect of the K-pop industry, as it often sparks conflicts and fan wars among fans (Menawati & Putri, 2023).

In conclusion, the diverse categories within the K-pop fandom, including single group-stans, multi-stans, solo stan and Akgae, demonstrate the unique engagement patterns of fans with their favourite idols. Despite the strength of fandom, issues like cyberbullying and tensions arising from solo stans highlight the complexities within the community. K-pop fandom is strong and diverse, with various categories of fans showing unique behaviours and preferences.

2.4 K-pop Purchasing Intention

Idolization gains significance due to its potential connection to mass media, impacting adolescents' purchasing power, their position in the lucrative entertainment industry, and society's efforts to safeguard them from influential pressures (Niu and Wang, 2009). Therefore, idols can influence adolescents' pursuit of meaning and shape their self-perception and interpersonal relationships.

Sharmaine and Callum conducted a qualitative study exploring consumptive agency via demographic and tends to understand the degree of fan experience in Malaysia (Loh & Gilmour, 2022). The result shows that the participants are all employed women with stable incomes, which enhances their fan experiences.

1. Their financial independence allows them to engage in transnational fan activities.
2. The increased financial power of middle-aged fans enhances their fan experience compared to younger fans.
3. Their middle-aged status and secure employment provide them with an enhanced fan experience.

In a survey assessing the monthly expenditure on South Korean pop music (K-Pop) worldwide, it shows that most of the respondents reported spending an average of \$4.5 (approx 18.81 MYR) on South Korean pop music (K-pop) content per month. The highest spending per month in K-pop is The United Arab Emirates (UAE), had the highest monthly expenditure on South Korean pop music (K-pop), averaging around 17.6 U.S. dollars (approx 73.04 MYR) (Statista Research Department, 2024).

2.4.1 K-pop Idol Merchandise and Purchasing Intention

Fans not only contribute financially but also offer promotional support. The deeper connection with the idol, the more they wanted to purchase all merchandise related to their bias of K-pop idols, particularly physical CDs. K-pop content, especially their merchandise which is K-pop Album often features unique packaging that appeals to consumers and encourages them to purchase and collect. Similarly, Zirra et al. (2017)

points out that packaging attributes influence consumer purchase decisions. Packaging is very important for buyers of products and these elements are effective in their decision to purchase (Zirra et al., 2017).

K-Pop fans are delighted by the music provided by their idol through the release of CD albums. Fans feel happiness from the music will motivate their purchasing decision. Their purchasing decisions were influenced by their satisfaction derived from owning albums and the sense of pride in possessing these items from their idol group (Lestari & Tiarawati, 2020). Purchasing an album is also an appreciation for K-Pop music. This explains that the K-Pop CD album can influence the purchasing decisions. Not only this, the quality of the product significantly influences the purchasing decision of K-Pop fans (Lo et al., 2023). Researchers have done a correlation test which concludes that product quality has a strong and significant relationship with purchasing decisions when it comes to K-Pop albums and merchandise purchasing in Indonesia. Understanding the different types of K-pop fans is crucial for identifying target audiences and tailoring marketing strategies to meet their specific needs and preferences.

In general, K-pop physical album packaging usually includes a beautiful design that matches its concept, including a photobook and various freebies such as photo cards, posters, or stickers. There is qualitative research conducted by Arisandi et al. (2023) which studies how certain fans can influence the consumption of products used by their idols. K-pop fans demonstrate high loyalty, as many are willing to spend money on merchandise and concert tickets to support their idols without hesitation. This confirms that K-pop fans are incredibly loyal and committed to giving their idols full support, regardless of the financial investment required (Arisandi et al., 2023).

Interestingly, fans often purchase multiple albums, as each album usually only contains one photo card, allowing them to collect all members of the group. For example, according to BTS Wiki Fandom (2016), BTS's album WINGS album consists of 4 versions which are each W, I, N, G Version containing CD, Photobook and Random Photocard (BTS Wiki Fandom, 2016). Some idol groups release multiple versions of the same album with different photo concepts and with different outfits is one of the factors that push fans or collectors to spend more on K-pop. Several news and data has proven the factors, for instance, SEVENTEEN's "FML," which containing 6 versions ranked as the top-selling physical album of 2023 and is the top 1 of IFPI Global Top 10 Album Chart 2023 having sold 6.4 million units (McIntyre, 2024; IFPI Global, 2023).

Not only albums, wearables, cheering slogans, dolls, light sticks, transparent fans and luggage tags are also a type of merchandise that fans can purchase to show support and love towards their favourite idol (Koreaboo, 2018). Many idol groups often release merchandise like T-shirts, jackets, or hats during their solo concerts. It is a better way to express support for a favourite group than by wearing their logo. For example, Black Pink offers T-shirts, jackets, and hats for their fans to wear especially during their concert tour (Weverse, n.d.). Most of the merchandise is now available to purchase on their fan cafes or fan clubs such as Weverse. Not only that, some groups such as Stray Kids and EXO, offer dolls as part of their merchandise. Light sticks are essential for fans attending music shows or concerts. Most groups have their own official light sticks, which may even change colours.

2.5 Celebrity Endorsement

A celebrity defined as a well-known individual, particularly in fields such as entertainment, including film, music, writing, or sports according to Collins Dictionary (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019). A research conducted by Nielson conducted in 2015 mentioning celebrity endorsements have a stronger impact on Generation Z (ages 15-20) and Millennial (ages 21-34) audiences (Okoli, 2016). Endorsement is often used in advertising and marketing especially on social media. Hershey (1979) suggested that specific combinations of products and endorsers could lead to the highest evaluation. For instance, jewellery and clothing were found to be more suitable for celebrity endorsement, while vacuum cleaners were more suitable for expert endorsement. This enhances consumer motivation to purchase due to the credibility of the endorser.

There is also a research study indicating that celebrity endorsers were most effective in maintaining brand-name recall and recall of the advertisement (Hershey & Linda, 1979). Serrano Manchón's research indicates that consumers can be influenced by music as a formative element of their environment or atmosphere (Serrano Manchón, 2021). Additionally, influencer and social media marketing offer benefits such as enhanced customer experience and credibility, allowing brands to communicate with customers and build long-term relationships. Many celebrities often mention or hold a product in their social media posts. This leads to exposure to a large portion of the audience and motivates them to purchase as celebrities hold some characteristic to attract their fans and have a lot of influence.

Previous studies have researched about the purchasing intention related to influence of likeability, credibility, and similarity on the endorsed brand image, under specific conditions (Priyankara et al., 2017; Byun, 2014). Physical attractiveness was

significantly related to brand image when the endorsement was relevant to the product domain in which attractiveness matters. When these qualities are perceived to match the brand and endorser, they have been shown to have a positive impact on brand image. However, marketing practitioners have varying views on the effectiveness of endorsements, with some believing the effects are positive while others believe the effects are insignificant. In terms of endorser credibility, defined as the perceived expertise and trustworthiness of the endorser, is crucial in shaping brand perception (Goldsmith et al., 2000). Familiarity is learning about a source through exposure, whereas likeability is the affection one feels toward a source due to its appearance and behaviour (Nguyen, n.d.).

Endorser likeability has a significant positive effect on purchase intention. Endorser likeability, credibility, and brand credibility positively influence brand attitude and purchase intention. Brand credibility is even more important than endorser credibility in shaping brand attitude. When individuals like the person delivering the message, they are more easily persuaded (Chin et al., 2017). Similarity or familiarity also plays a significant role, as familiarity makes it easier for consumers to recall the brand or product when the need arises (Nguyen, n.d.). Isti Februari Afifah's research has confirmed that these three factors which are likeability, credibility, and similarity are crucial for increasing purchase intention through celebrity endorsement (Afifah, 2022). However, familiarity may depend on the product type. Priyankara et al. found that other factors, such as familiar faces and the lifestyle of the celebrity used in perfume brand endorsements, were not significant in their research study (Priyankara et al., 2017). Therefore, familiarity has to be carefully utilized in advertising for market practitioners.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the research methodology. Research method is an important step in the research process offering a structure for methodically and carefully planning, carrying out, and evaluating research. This chapter will outline the research design, data collection strategy, sampling design, research instrument, construct measurement, data processing, and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

Thesis research design is a crucial link in the research process. It refers to a general framework that involves the processes which are used to investigate, gather, analyse, and interpret data in order to answer questions or to test hypotheses (McCombes, 2021). It included the clarification of research objectives, the elaboration of research content, the selection of research methods, the planning of research procedures and steps, and the allocation of research resources. The purpose of research design is to ensure that the methods used are reasonable, reliable, while ensuring that the research is valid, objective and clear. Research design also involves the selection of theoretical models and methods, the establishment of data collection and analysis methods, and how to answer research questions or verify research hypotheses through data collection and analysis. Singh (2023) outlined several basic characteristics of research design, including key components such as “reliability,” “neutrality,” and “validity” (Singh, 2023). Reliability involves the consistency and reliability of research results, ensuring that the results can be used under similar conditions. In a research paper, “reliability” promotes accuracy and consistency in measurements and achieving

involves using standardized instruments and maintaining consistent data collection methods. Therefore, survey research methodology is employed in this study. Next, “Neutrality” is another characteristic that requires researchers to avoid bias in sampling, instrumentation, and analysis. Therefore, it is significant to ensure the wording of survey questions is carefully crafted neutrally and prevent bias (Bhattacharjee, 2019). Finally, "Validity" is the characteristic that helps minimize errors in the research. Researchers may employ valid measurement tools to test the results (Indeed Editorial Team, 2023).

According to Jerome (2010), there are three basic stages when conducting an effective research project to answer or test a stated hypothesis. The first stage of research design is “Planning”. In a research paper, it is important for the researcher to set an objective or goals which the decisions are made regarding which measurement to collect, and to decide the size of sampling participants to involve. Therefore, the research design is established, and potential outcomes and their implications are considered in the research paper. Following, the second stage is “Data collections” and “Data analyzation”. Data collection helps researchers to obtain information to help answer the research hypothesis. The collected data allows researchers to analyse it based on the approach. Data analysis comprises several interconnected phases, including establishing categories and applying them to raw data. Researchers can examine the acquired data using a variety of statistical methods (Villegas, 2022). Descriptive statistics are computed, estimations are made about population parameters, and inferential tests are conducted to ascertain if the observed effects are significant beyond what could occur randomly. The findings of these analyses are presented through text, tables, and graphs in the Results section of the final report.

Lastly, the research has to do data interpretation which is the final stage of research design. It is typically discussed in the Discussion section of the research report: In order to check the primary objective is to address the inquiries that motivated the research. Researchers have to explore the findings revealed about the initial questions that have been posed.

This research paper aims to explore how K-pop idolization influences fans' purchasing behaviours within the context of the K-pop industry. Specifically, the study investigates the relationship between K-pop idolization (independent variable) and fans' purchasing intention (dependent variable). Hence, quantitative research is adopted in this research paper.

3.1.1 Types of Research Design - Quantitative Research

In research design, there are different types of research design which are usually divided into qualitative and quantitative research. Quantitative research relies on data, statistics, graphs, charts, and mathematical calculations to address questions about who, what, where, and how. This method seeks patterns or averages within the data to inform business decisions (Indeed Editorial Team, 2023). Its objective is to provide insight and understanding of the social world (Allen et al., 2008). According to McCombes (2021), quantitative approach typically involves measuring various types of variables and testing hypotheses regarding their relationships. This approach enables researchers to assess the efficacy of a treatment. Quantitative research is characterized by its objectivity and reliance on statistical methods to analyse data. By employing various statistical and computational techniques, it aims to establish cause-and-effect relationships among variables. These methods allow researchers to quantitatively

measure and analyse data, providing insights into the relationships between different factors.

On the other hand, while qualitative research delves into the everyday communication activities, quantitative research aims to uncover relationships and predict outcomes (Goundar, 2019). It focuses on phenomena that involve qualities or subjective attributes. In a qualitative approach, it helps researchers understand concepts and gain more knowledge within a context or culture. Thus, quantitative research is suitable for this paper as this paper aims to understand the relationship between K-pop idolization (independent variable) and fans' purchasing intention (dependent variable).

3.1.2 Descriptive Research

Descriptive research has been identified as systematically providing information about the facts and characteristics of a population of interest. It accurately portrays the characteristics of particular individuals or groups and helps to discover new meanings within existing phenomena (Dulock, 1993).

Descriptive research is a theory-based research method that describes the primary subject matter of the study. According to Jain (2022), this type of research design utilizes data collection techniques such as natural observation, case studies, and surveys to derive results. One characteristic of descriptive research as stated by Helen (1993), is that it typically observes, describes, or documents the current status of the phenomenon in a naturalistic setting (Dulock, 1993). It delves into the 'why' and 'how' of research, aiming to uncover the underlying causes and processes involved in a particular phenomenon or behaviour. Through this approach, researchers gain a deeper understanding of the intricacies and dynamics at play within their study area.

Hence, descriptive research becomes the suitable option when the objective of the study is to identify characteristics, frequencies, trends, and categories (McCombes, 2019). According to Wendelien Lans (2002), descriptive research involves several characteristics which include purpose, sampling, data collection techniques, and data analysis. Identifying the purpose of research is to describe the characteristics, behaviours, and attributes of a specific population or phenomenon. It requires a representative sample of the larger population being studied, so the sampling method is crucial (Sirisilla, 2023). Objectivity or neutrality is crucial in descriptive research to ensure that the data collected accurately represent the phenomenon being studied. Objectivity generally refers to the researcher's ability to see things as they are without being influenced by subjective abilities; neutrality directly involves the researcher taking the side of something/someone at the expense of others involved (Subhendra, 2016). A feature of descriptive research is the inability to manipulate variables but rather the identification, review and quantification of uncontrolled variables.

Data collection techniques in descriptive research include qualitative and quantitative methods such as surveys, observational studies, case studies, or focus groups. This study used a survey method to collect data. Mc Combes stated that surveys are often used to describe demographics, measure public opinion, or assess satisfaction with a product or service. In terms of data analysis, statistical techniques such as frequency distributions and descriptive statistics are often used to summarize and describe the data collected. Descriptive research can be quantitative and allows researchers to collect data for statistical analysis. This data is often used through surveys, polls, or experiments to reveal patterns, connections, and trends over time. Quantitative descriptive questions usually require figures such as percentages, sums, or averages (DeCarlo, 2018). According to the Wendelien Lans (2002), disciplines such

as geography and social geography heavily rely on descriptions of reality without explanations or evaluations. Thus, in this study, the survey aims to describe the demographics, location, and lifestyle of a particular population. For example, respondents will be asked question such as “Do you know K-pop?”, “Do you like K-pop?”, “Have you ever purchased any merchandise or product related to your favourite K-pop idol?” and so on. It allows the researchers to have a deeper understanding of K-pop Idolization on Fan’s purchasing intentions.

3.2 Data Collection Method

Data collection serves as a systematic and organized approach to gathering observations or measurements relevant to a particular research problem (Bhandari, 2020). This methodological process is crucial for obtaining first-hand knowledge and original insights that directly contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. The method of obtaining data or information from study participants or sources is included in this aspect of the research design. It involves choosing which data to gather, how to get it, and what equipment or tools to utilize.

Primary data is information collected directly by the researcher, usually in real time (Wagh, 2023). This type of data collection involves methods such as surveys, observations, experiments, and questionnaires. Secondary data, on the other hand, refers to information previously collected by others. This data can be obtained from a variety of sources, such as government publications, websites, books, journal articles, and internal records. Before beginning the data collection process, researchers must define their goals and identify appropriate data sources, which can include primary (primary research) and secondary (existing sources) data. It is considered the most

valuable type of data in research because it provides first-hand information that is specific to the research objectives. This research relies on online surveys as its primary data collection method is suitable for researchers to describe real time phenomena. This guarantees time efficiency and ease of analysis.

Through systematic data collection, researchers can collect a diverse range of information, enabling them to draw conclusions and make informed decisions based on the evidence gathered. The importance of using quantitative data collection in research is to decide whether a hypothesis is significant, and it helps strategic planning in research study. This first-hand information is the foundation upon which analyses, interpretations, and solutions are built, highlighting the essential role of data collection in the research process (Bhandari, 2020).

As outlined by Emily and Craig (2022), the quantitative data collection process involves five key steps: Recognize a research problem and establish project objectives. Then, researchers have to determine the data requirements necessary to address the issue or provide the required research insights. Identify the datasets that contain the relevant information. Develop a data collection plan, outlining the methods and strategies to be used. Collect the necessary data and initiate the preparation process for analysis (Emily & Craig, 2022). Researcher has to ensure that the data is accurate and make sure not to collect irrelevant data that may waste time during the process.

Data collection often faces various challenges, including insufficient identifying information; this occurs when data lacks clear identifiers, making it difficult to attribute to specific individuals or entities. There might also be some respondents who may struggle to understand the questions or instructions provided due to language barriers, low literacy levels, or complex terminology. Finding relevant data has been a challenge

in data collection as respondents may provide inaccurate or incomplete information if they do not fully understand the context of the questions or the purpose of the data collection (Paredes, 2024). Inappropriate sampling or insufficient sampling methods that are not representative of the target population can lead to biased or unreliable data. To address these challenges, it's essential to implement appropriate measures before, during, and after data collection. This includes quality assurance measures to ensure that data collection protocols are well-defined and strict, and quality control measures to monitor data collection processes and identify and address any issues that arise (Elite Research, 2004).

3.2.1 Sampling Design

This section includes the target population, sample frame, sampling location, sampling size, sampling elements, and sampling procedure. The specifics of the sample design are as follows:

3.2.1.1 Target Population

The first step in quantitative data collection involves identifying the individuals and places to be studied. The target population is then delineated from this larger group, covering the entire group of interest to the researcher (DJS Research, 2019). Determining an appropriate sample size is critical because it provides an estimate of how many participants will participate in the study. Essentially, the target population represents the group from which data will be collected and conclusions drawn of what the study aimed to investigate and analyse was demographic data. In a cost-

effectiveness analysis, the characteristics of the target population and any subgroups must be clearly described (Barnsbee, 2018).

This research study focused on Malaysians aged 18 to 26 years old, with no restrictions on gender, race, education or occupation. Consequently, the researchers aimed to increase the accuracy of the study by leveraging their understanding of the independent variables related to K-pop idolization and fan purchasing intentions, including celebrity influence or endorsement. Sampling involves selecting a group of people, objects or items for measurement within a broader target population (Mujere, 2016). The researcher points out that the purpose of sampling is to save time and cost, as a sample may provide necessary information quickly instead of a broad population. The precision of a sample is higher than that of a poorly executed count. The goal is to draw conclusions based on findings from the selected sample and make generalizations to the entire target population. There are two main sampling methods: probability sampling and non-probability sampling.

3.2.1.2 Sampling Probability

Probability sampling is an essential component of survey design, allowing for statistical inferences about the entire population. In contrast, nonprobability sampling relies on models for validity. Probability sampling involves random selection, providing the basis for statistical analysis. Conversely, nonprobability sampling entails non-random selection, often based on convenience or specific criteria, simplifying the data collection process (Nikolopoulou, 2022).

With the advent of the internet in the late 20th century, nonprobability sampling gained popularity as a fast and cost-effective method for recruiting online panels. As a

result, the majority of survey data collected online today rely on nonprobability samples (Callegaro et al., 2014a, 2014b). When time or budget constraints make random probability sampling impractical, researchers turn to this approach. Non-Probability sampling methods include convenience sampling, purposive sampling, snowball sampling, and quota sampling. In this research, convenience sampling was utilized.

Convenience sample is the most common form of method that is used in non-probability sampling. The features of any sample obtained through convenience sampling must be examined to assess how accurately it reflects the population. Philip (2013) mentioned that convenience sampling involved selecting patients because it was convenient, and they were readily accessible, which means participants were chosen because they were the easiest to recruit for the study (Philip, 2013). Convenience sampling allows researchers to collect data that would otherwise be difficult or impossible to obtain. There are few examples of convenience sampling methods (Nikolopoulou, 2022) include: Online recruitment via advertisements or social media posts, in-person recruitment at events or at relevant locations, using crowdsourcing websites like Micro Workers, recruiting from pre-existing groups such as organizations or college students. In this digital era, it is very convenient for an online community, researchers may choose to draw a convenience sample of users. Researchers can invite users to complete an online survey, with the administrators' agreement to place it on the website. However, convenience samples easily yield as sampling bias due to its weak generalizability (Jager et al., 2017). Thus, it may not guarantee a fully representative sample of the population which may be at risk of selection bias (McCombes, 2019). Thus, convenience sampling is often chosen for its practicality and ease of data collection.

3.3 Sampling Size and Sampling Elements

Sample size is a frequently used term in statistics and market research, referring to the number of elements in a subset of a population. On the other hand, the sampling frame is a comprehensive list that includes all the elements within a particular population (Creswell, 2012). Notably, sample size is a crucial step for getting accurate and significant results to study the research successfully, if it is too large a sample is unnecessary and unethical, while too small a sample is unscientific and also unethical (Andrade, 2020). There's a risk of including a disproportionate number of odd data, leading the results and providing an unfair picture of the entire population. Conversely, if the sample size is too large, the study becomes complex, expensive, and time-consuming to conduct. While larger sample sizes may yield more accurate results, the benefits may not outweigh the costs.

The sample size for this study is set at 120 respondents, which is significant for gaining a comprehensive understanding of the targeted population. Specifically, the sampling elements are aimed at Malaysians aged between 18 and 26 years old. Recent research indicates that a substantial portion of the K-pop fanbase falls within the 18 to 24 age group, constituting approximately 60% annually (UCLA, 2023). Moreover, social media usage data reveals that the largest demographic comprises users at the 18 to 24 age range at 22% of the user base (Factory, 2023). Hence the sampling elements are restricted to the age range of 18 to 26 years old.

3.4 Sampling Frame and Sampling Location

In this study, the sampling frame consists of respondents who regularly view K-pop content on social media and are exposed to K-pop during most of the time per day.

The sampling site is located in Malaysia, specifically targeting young adults in the Klang Valley regions of Selangor and Kuala Lumpur. This choice is influenced by the significance of Kuala Lumpur as Malaysia's capital and largest city which consists of many youngsters.

According to Ronald, the initial step in choosing sampling points or locations for inclusion in a sampling plan is to review the objectives of the sampling program (Ronald, 2006). In this research, conducting data collection in the Klang Valley is justified by the study's time constraints, aiming to capture information from the most densely populated area to better represent the overall population. Other reasons for choosing the Klang Valley include its cultural diversity, economic importance, and urban characteristics, making it a representative location for studying Malaysian young adults and their purchasing intention.

3.5 Research Instrument

A research instrument is a tool used to collect, measure and analyse data relevant to research interests (Study Smarter UK, 2022). It is a crucial step in choosing the right research instrument as it simplifies data collection and produces more accurate results for research purposes. The most common research tools include interviews, surveys, observations, and focus groups (Mallory-Kani, 2022).

3.5.1 Questionnaire Survey

Questionnaires are a widely used research tool that can be self-administered or administered with researcher interference (Study Smarter UK, 2022). Self-administered

questionnaires were completed in the absence of the researcher and were filled in by the respondents themselves. This approach allows participants to remain anonymous and share their perspectives more easily. However, the disadvantage is that the researcher has no control over who fills out the questionnaire or when it is returned. In this research study, self-administered questionnaires approach was utilized as it helps researchers avoid bias during data collection.

A questionnaire consists of a list of questions designed to collect data from a large group. In survey research, questions are primarily closed-ended or include rating scales that collect data in a standardized manner. Web surveys, also known as online surveys is referring to a data collection method in which surveys or questionnaires are distributed over the internet to a sample of respondents which have the opportunity to respond to the survey via the internet. The web-based questionnaire helps researchers gather data more cost-effectively, timesaving, and allows for broad geographic coverage (Question pro, 2019). Hence, Google Forms will serve as the tool for this set of questionnaires, which will be distributed through social media platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp. The questionnaire is structured into four pages, comprising three sections that primarily consist of closed-ended questions.

3.5.2 Questionnaire Design

It's particularly crucial to take into account the education level of the survey population when assessing how easily respondents can interpret and respond to a question (Pew Research Center, 2021). The questionnaire is designed in English, as it is widely understood among the Malaysian population and it is easily understood by youngsters. The questionnaire design comprises four sections: Section A (Demographic

Data), Section B (Psychographic Data), Section C (Factors Influencing Purchase Intention), and Section D (Relationship between Idolization and Purchase Intention). The questionnaire cover includes the topic of the survey, and consent information. Participants' email addresses will be recorded in this section. Figure 3.1 displays a screenshot of the questionnaire cover.

KPOP IDOLIZATION INFLUENCE FANS' PURCHASING INTENTION

Greeting everyone! I am Tan KaiWen, a final year student of Bachelor of Communication (Honours) Broadcasting at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). I am currently conducting a research for my Final Year Project (FYP) entitled "KPOP IDOLIZATION INFLUENCE FANS' PURCHASING INTENTION".

You are invited to attend this research survey questionnaire. This research aims to identify the factors that influence fans' purchasing intention through K-pop Idolization and identify the relationship between K-pop Idolization and fans' purchasing intention.

Please note that the **CONFIDENTIALITY** of your responses is meticulously assured. The date collected will only be used for educational and research purpose only. If you have any inquiries or doubt, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at kaiwentan421@1utar.my.

The researcher would like to express great appreciation for your time and effort in participating in the survey questionnaire.

Switch account

Not shared

* Indicates required question

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. There is no foreseeable risk of harm or discomfort in answering this questionnaire. You may decide to proceed or stop at any time. The response is not traceable back to any individual participant as this is an anonymous questionnaire. As mentioned above, this data collected from this questionnaire will be used for the purpose of this study only.

I have been informed about the purpose of the study and I give me consent to participate in this survey.

☒ Yes (You may proceed to next page)

☐ No (You may stop here and return the questionnaire to researcher)

Figure 3.1: Questionnaire Cover – Brief Explanation

Next, Section A is mainly focused on collecting participants' demographic information. This section utilized multiple choice questions which consisted of six questions such as age, gender, race, educational background, occupation, monthly income. Monthly income helps researchers to understand respondents' purchasing behaviour as this aims to understand the purchasing intention of K-pop fans.

Section A: Demographic

1. Age *

☐ 18 - 20

☐ 21 - 23

☐ 24 - 26

2. Gender *

☐ Male

☐ Female

3. Race *

☐ Malay

☐ Chinese

☐ Indian

☐ Other: _____

4. Educational Background *

☐ Primary (UPSR, etc)

☐ Secondary (PMR, PT3, SPM, etc)

☐ Post-secondary (STPM, UEC, A-Level, Foundation, Diploma, etc)

☐ Undergraduate (Degree, etc)

☐ Postgraduate (Master, PhD, etc)

Figure 3.2: Questionnaire for Section A - Demographic

Followed by, Section B is mainly focused on the psychographic part of the participants. This section utilized different types of questions with seven multiple-choice question types. The researcher can use participant 's media preferences to understand participant s' attitudes, values, interests which specifically focuses on K-pop content. And also, their purchasing behaviours that related to K-pop idols. Figure 3.3 is a screenshot of the questionnaire of media consumption of K-pop.

Section B: Psychographic

1. Do you know K-pop? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. Do you like K-pop? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

3. How often do you watch K-pop content on social media platforms? *

☐ 1 - 5 times per week

☐ 6 - 10 times per week

☐ more than 10 times per week

4. Do you follow any K-pop idol? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

5. How frequently do you browse any news related to K-pop idol you like? *

☐ 1 - 5 times per week

☐ 6 - 10 times per week

☐ more than 10 times per week

Figure 3.3: Questionnaire for Section B - Psychographic

Section C consists of 15 questions which will focus on factors influencing purchase intention enabling researchers to delve into participants' perspectives, actions and behaviours. The questions presented in Figure 3.4 will be posed to participants, who will employ a Five-point Likert Scale in Section C, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Participants are requested to indicate agreement or disagreement with each of the statements. Figure 3.4 is a screenshot of a small part of the questionnaire.

Section C: Factors that influence fans' purchase intention through K-pop idolization					
Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. *					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I would purchase K-pop merchandise because of my strong idolization of specific K-pop idol group.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would purchase K-pop merchandise because of the visual appearance of the K-pop idol.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would purchase K-pop merchandise especially during my favourite K-pop idol promotional period (such as comebacks, anniversaries).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would purchase K-pop merchandise because I have strong urges to have a merchandise of K-pop idol that I like.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Figure 3.4: Questionnaire for Section C -

Factors that influence fans' purchase intention through K-pop idolization

Section D consists of 10 questions which will focus on the relationship between K-pop idolization and fans' purchase intention. The questions presented in Figure 3.5 and 3.6 will be posed to participants, who will employ a Five-point Likert Scale in Section D, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. This part has categorized as two attributes which is Influence of Idol Attributes on Purchase Decision and Support for Idol Regardless of Product Features:

Section D: Relationship between K-pop idolization and fans' purchase intention					
Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. *					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
My decision to purchase the merchandise will depend on how much I like my idol.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My decision to purchase the merchandise will depend on the attractiveness of the idol.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My decision to purchase the merchandise will depend on the trustworthiness of the idol.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My decision to purchase the merchandise will depend on the personality of the idol.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My decision to purchase the merchandise will depend on the talent of the idol.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Figure 3.5: Questionnaire for Section D - Influence of Idol Attributes
Relationship between K-pop idolization and fans' purchase intention

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. *					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
In support of my favourite K-pop idol, I will purchase the merchandise regardless of the price.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In support of my favourite K-pop idol, I will purchase the merchandise regardless of the quality.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In support of my favourite K-pop idol, I will purchase the merchandise regardless of the authenticity.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In support of my favourite K-pop idol, I will purchase the merchandise regardless of the usefulness.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In support of my favourite K-pop idol, I will purchase the merchandise regardless of the exclusivity.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Figure 3.6: Questionnaire for Section D - Support for Idol Regardless of Product Features Relationship between K-pop idolization and fans' purchase intention

3.6 Construct Measurement

Construct measurement, also known as scales of measurement, is an important process of operationalizing abstract concepts or constructs into measurable variables (Emily, 2023). Levels of measurement in data and statistics refers to measuring how accurate a variable is. There are different types of information to collect during the survey process, and it is dependent on the researcher's objective of what needs to be investigated. Researchers can utilize different measurement scales to create a range or make categorisation. There are 4 types of measurement scales, which are nominal scale, ordinal scale and interval scale and ratio scale.

3.6.1 Nominal Scale

Nominal scales are the most flexible scale as it can categorize variables according to its label. The way of collecting nominal data is to incorporate a multiple-choice question into the survey (Bhat, 2018). With this type of question, respondents select from predefined options without any particular order necessary for the labels. This approach allows for the collection of categorical data where the categories do not have a natural order or hierarchy. Additionally, multiple-choice questions provide respondents with clear and structured options to choose from, making it easier for them to respond accurately. Multiple choice questions are frequently used in surveys making both respondent and researcher efficient to identify (Emma, 2022). Furthermore, this

method facilitates the analysis of data by providing discrete categories that can be easily quantified and compared.

For example, demographic question that posed in Section A has utilized nominal scale to measure such as age (18 – 20, 21 – 23, 24 – 26), gender (Female or Male), ethnicity (Malay, Chinese, Indian), occupation (employed, self-employed, unemployed, student).

3.6.2 Ordinal Scale

Ordinal scale is the second level of measurement, which matters to its order but not the value's difference. These scales typically represent non-mathematical concepts like frequency, satisfaction, happiness, or levels of pain (Adi, 2018). While for the ordinal scale, it is often used to label groups and hierarchy exists in this scale. Ordinal data help researchers classify variables into categories which have a ranking (Emily, 2023). For instance, Section B has utilized ordinal scale in the question of educational background (Primary, Secondary, Post-secondary, Undergraduate, Postgraduate), Some question that identify their frequency is considered ordinal scale, for instance “How often do you watch K-pop content on social media platforms?” “How frequently do you purchase K-pop merchandise” “How frequently do you browse any news related to K-pop idols you like?” This help researcher to understand their consumer pattern of media and K-pop to study the idolization levels enabling researchers to conveniently analyse the collected data.

3.6.3 Interval Scale (Likert Scale)

Interval scale is defined as a quantitative measurement scale. In the context of Interval scale, each variable has an equal difference. Agreement, satisfaction levels or likelihood is categorized as interval scales example (Adi, 2018). Taherdoost (2019) highlighted that this method finds extensive application in social science research, particularly in assessing attitudes and utilizing rating scales (Taherdoost, 2019). Likert scale, Net Promoter Score, Semantic Differential Scale, Bipolar Matrix Table, etc., are the most-used interval scale examples. In this questionnaire, likert scale is utilized in Section C and Section D. The five-point Likert scale provides respondents with a range of options, typically from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree," allowing them to express their degree of agreement or disagreement with a statement.

3.7 Data Analysis

A descriptive analysis will be conducted to investigate the attributes of K-pop idolization that could impact consumer attitudes and purchasing intention. Given that all questions are closed-ended, statistical analysis will be employed to ascertain the impact of Idolization. By providing brief descriptions of the sample and data measures, researchers may summarise it as a descriptive statistic assisted in the description and comprehension of the characteristics of a particular data set. Measurements of central tendency and measurements of variability (spread) are the two categories into which descriptive statistics fall (Hayes, 2023). The standard deviation, variance, minimum and maximum variable are measurements of variability, whereas the mean, median, and mode are measures of central tendency. Upon collecting responses, Bar graphs and pie charts will be created to present the data systematically for analysis purposes.

3.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has detailed the research design, data collection methods, sampling design, research instrument, construct measurement, data processing, and data analysis method. The research leverages a Google Form survey tool for data collection, involving 120 respondents who provided significant data. The outcomes of the analysis will be further expounded upon in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Finding

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the results of the finding and analysis will be discussing and present from 120 respondents through the online survey questionnaire. The data will be presented by using graphs and tables, and statistical methods like percentage, frequency will be used to analyse the outcomes.

4.1 Section A: Demographic

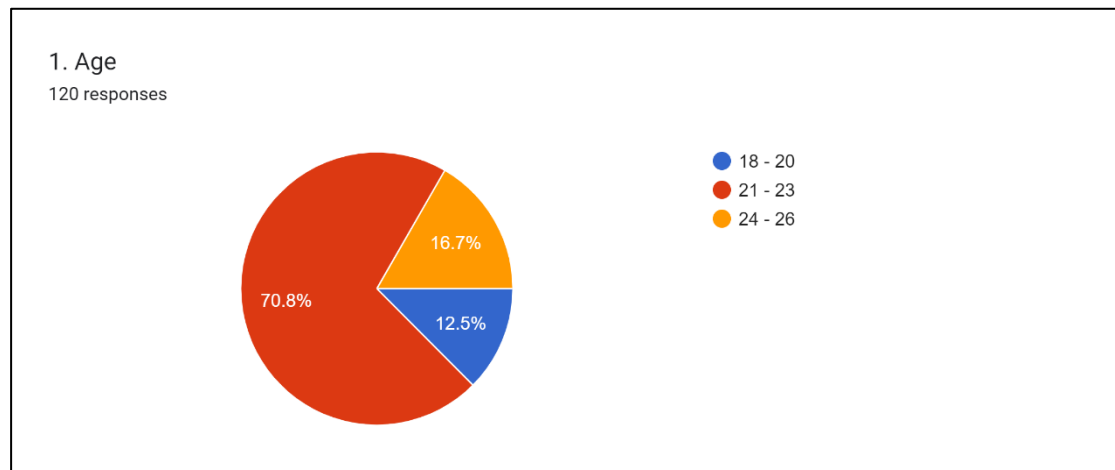


Figure 4.1: Age

Figure 4.1 show the majority of the respondents who participate in this survey aged between 21 to 23 years old which is 70.8% (85 respondents). Following by the respondents aged between 24 to 26 years old which is 16.7% (20 respondents) and 12.5% is the lowest percentage where 15 respondents who aged between 18 to 20 years old.

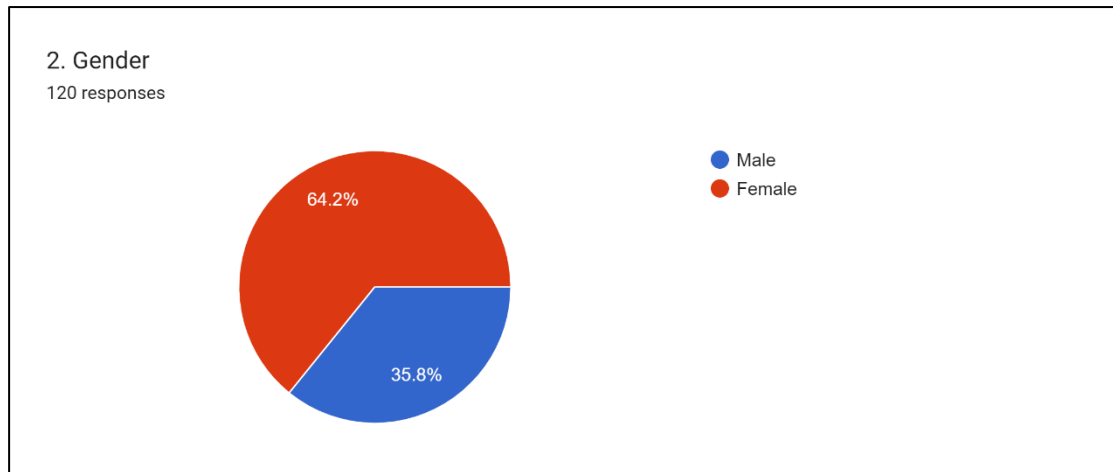


Figure 4.2: Gender

In this survey, there are a total of 120 respondents. The number of female respondents is more than male respondents. There are 77 female respondents (64.2%) and 43 male respondents (35.8%) who took part in this survey as shown in Figure 4.2.

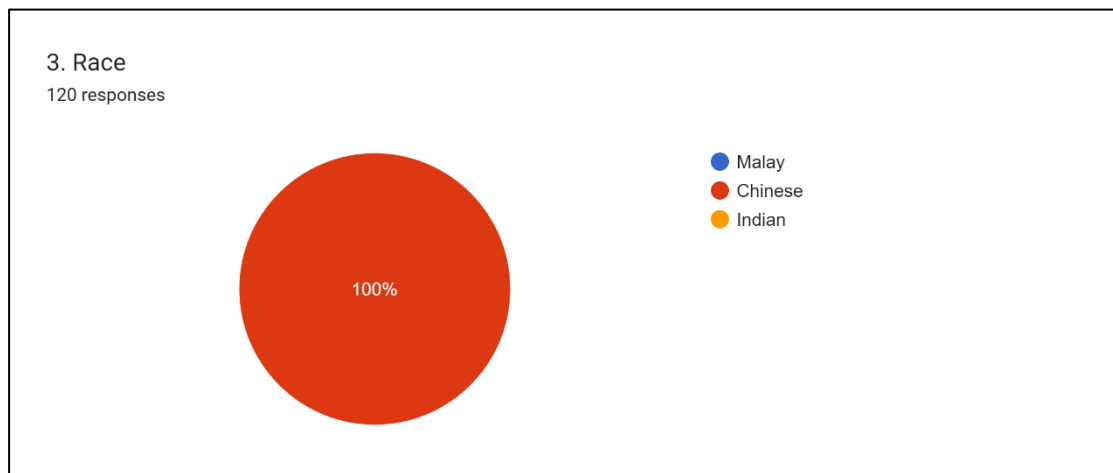


Figure 4.3: Race

Figure 4.3 show the race of the respondents in this survey. There are three category such as Malay, Chinese and Indian. There is only one race participate in this survey, all 120 respondents are Chinese which is 100%. Other category such as Malay and Indian respondents are absent in this survey.

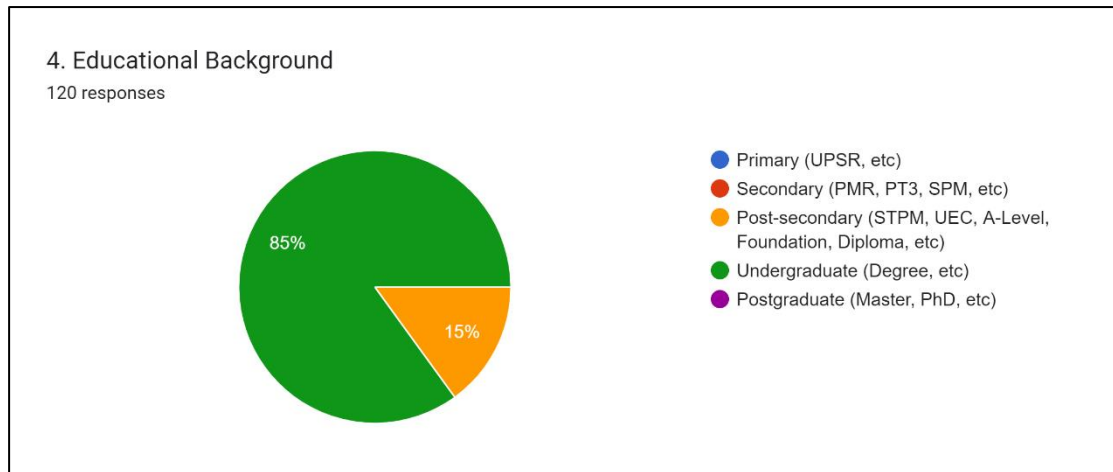


Figure 4.4 Educational Background

There are only two categories involve in this survey by the respondents which are post-secondary and undergraduate as shown in Figure 4.4. Respondents who are undergraduate is the highest percentage in this survey which is 85% (102 respondents) and follow by respondents who are post-secondary with 15% (18 respondents). There are no respondents who are primary, secondary and postgraduate.

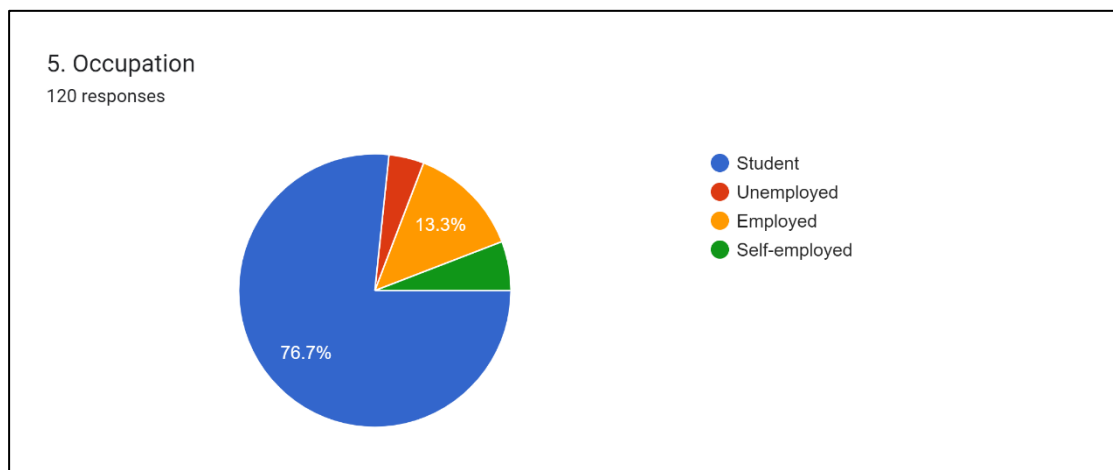


Figure 4.5: Occupation

Figure 4.5 show the majority of the respondents in this survey are student with the percentage of 76.7% (92 respondents). Following by respondents who are employed

is 13.3% (16 respondents). Then, respondents who are self-employed and unemployed are 5.8% (7 respondents) and 4.2% (5 respondents) respectively.

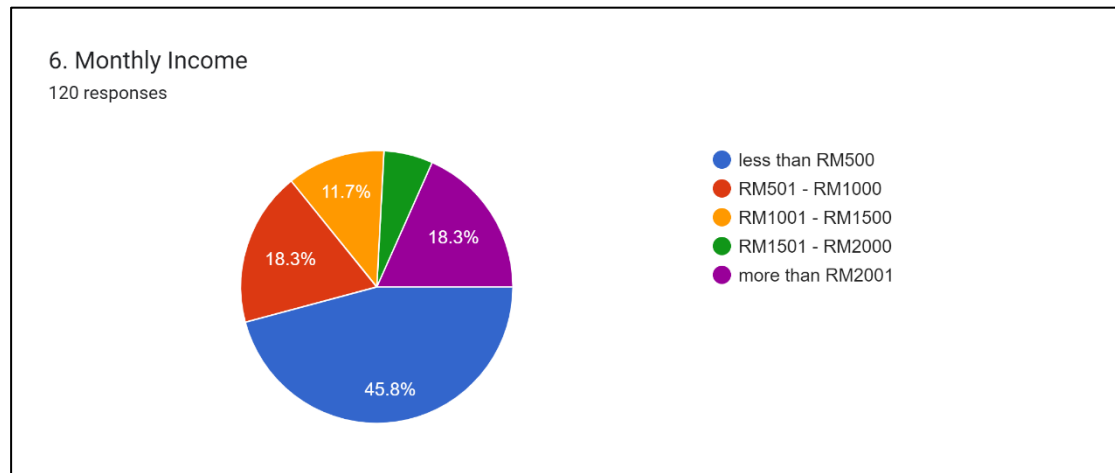


Figure 4.6: Monthly Income

The monthly income of the respondents who are less than RM500 is the highest percentage in this survey with 45.8% (55 respondents) as shown in Figure 4.6. Then, the monthly income of both respondents who are between RM501 to RM1000 and more than RM2001 has the same percentage which is 18.3% (22 respondents) respectively. Thus, respondents who has monthly income between RM1001 to RM1500 is 11.7% (14 respondents). Lastly, 5.8% (7 respondents) is the lowest percentage where the respondents' monthly income is between RM1501 to RM2000.

4.2 Section B: Psychographic

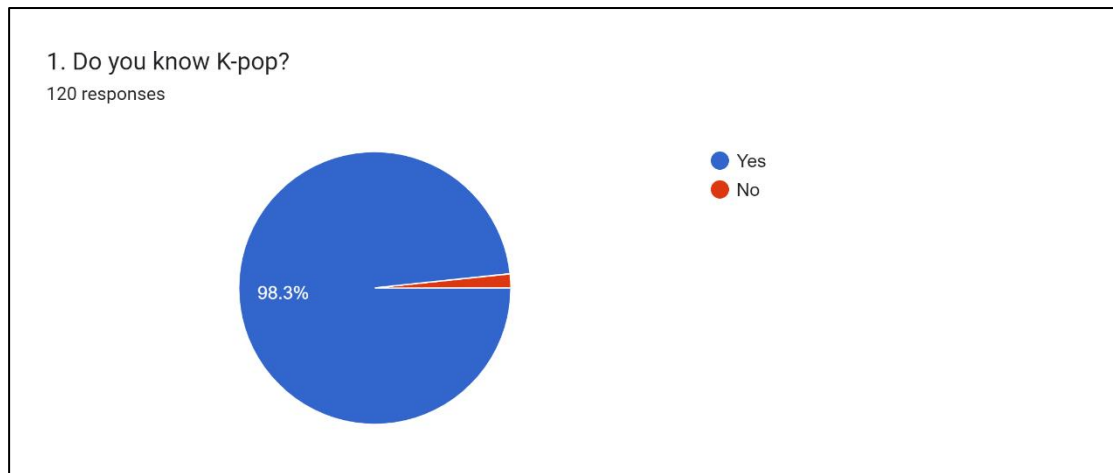


Figure 4.7: Do you know K-pop?

According to Figure 4.7, it shows that among 120 respondents there are 118 respondents (98.3%) know what K-pop and there are only 2 respondents (1.7%) don't know what K-pop is.

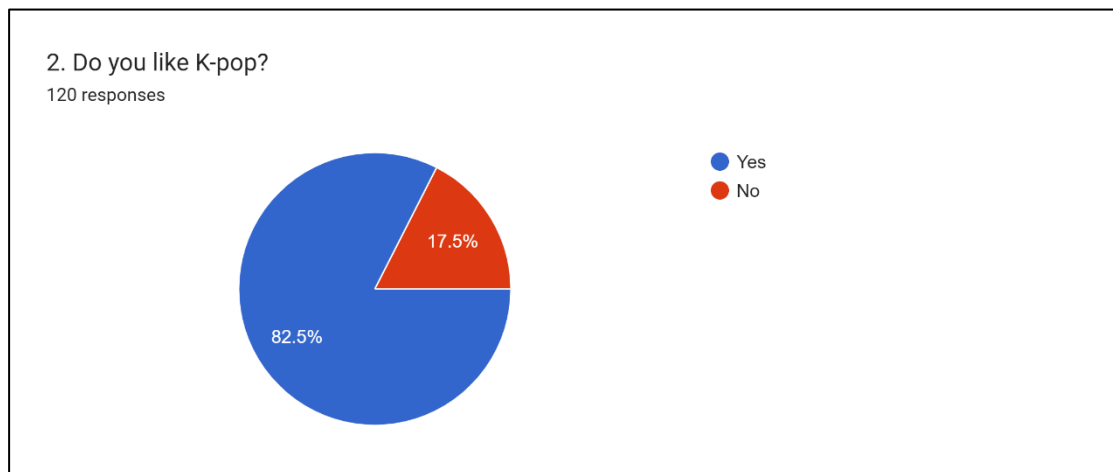


Figure 4.8: Do you like K-pop?

Based on Figure 4.8, majority of the respondents' state that they like K-pop which is 82.5% (99 respondents). The rest of the 17.5% of the respondents (21 respondents) has state that they don't like K-pop.

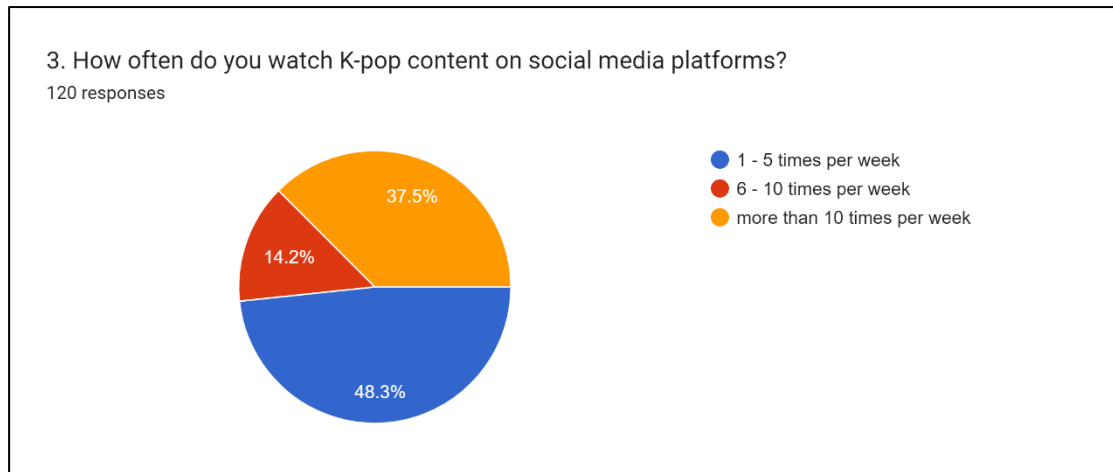


Figure 4.9: How often do you watch K-pop content on social media platforms?

58 (48.3%) out of 120 respondents watch K-pop content on social media platforms 1 to 5 times per week as shown in Figure 4.9. Moreover, 45 (37.5%) out of 120 respondents watch K-pop content on social media platforms more than 10 times per week while the remaining 17 (14.2%) respondents watch K-pop content on social media platforms 6 to 10 times per week.

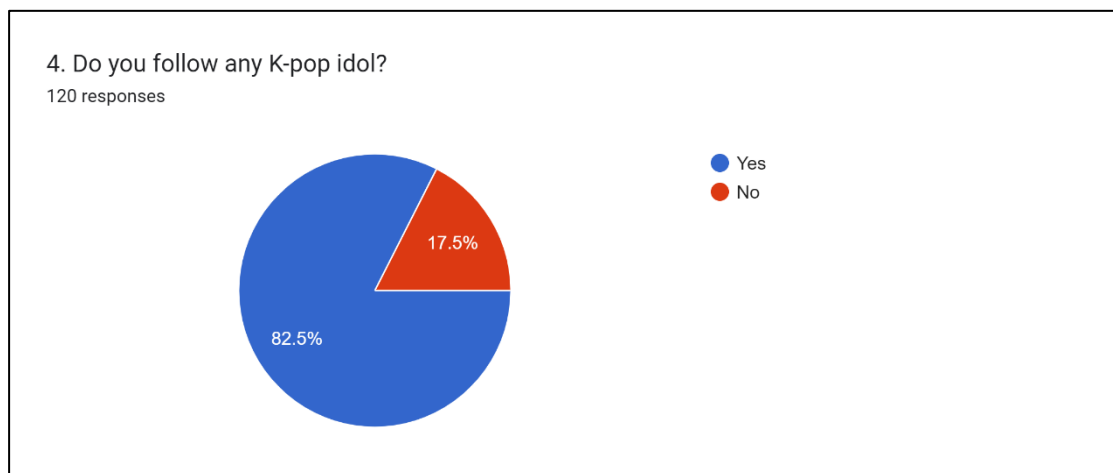


Figure 4.10: Do you follow any K-pop idol?

Figure 4.10 show the result of whether the respondents follow any K-pop idol. There are 82.5% of the respondents (99 respondents) has follow K-pop idol while 17.5% of the respondents (21 respondents) has not follow any K-pop idol.

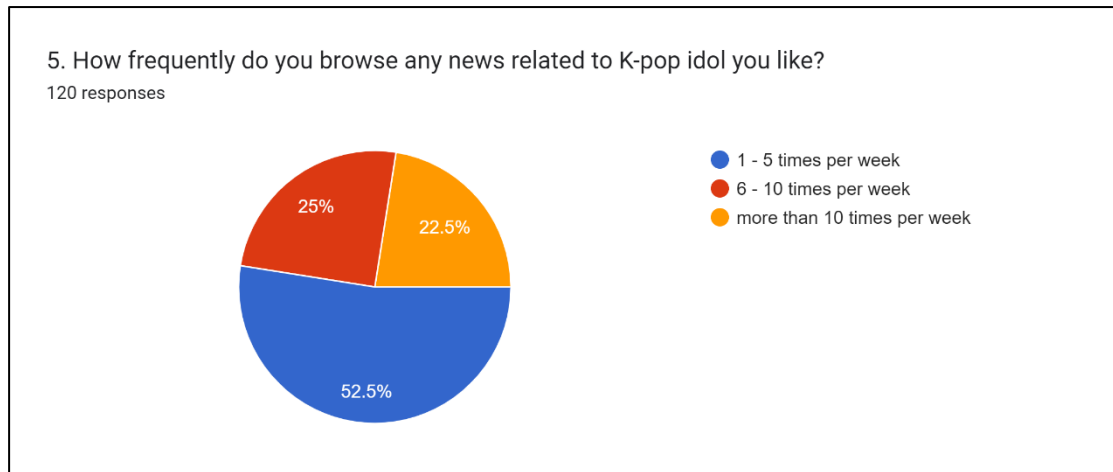


Figure 4.11: How frequently do you browse any news related to K-pop idol you like?

Based on Figure 4.11, 52.5% of the respondents (63 respondents) browse news related to K-pop idol they like about 1 to 5 times per week. Following by 25% of the respondents (30 respondents) browse news related to their favourite K-pop idol 6 to 10 times per week and 22.5% of the respondents (27 respondents) browse more than 10 times per week for the news related to their favourite K-pop idol



Figure 4.12: Have you ever purchased any merchandise or product related to your favourite K-pop idol?

Figure 4.12 show the result of the respondents who purchased and never purchased merchandise product related to their favourite K-pop idol. The result show that 60% of the respondents (72 respondents) do purchased merchandise product related to their K-pop idol while the remaining 40% of the respondents (48 respondents) never purchased merchandise product related to their K-pop idol.

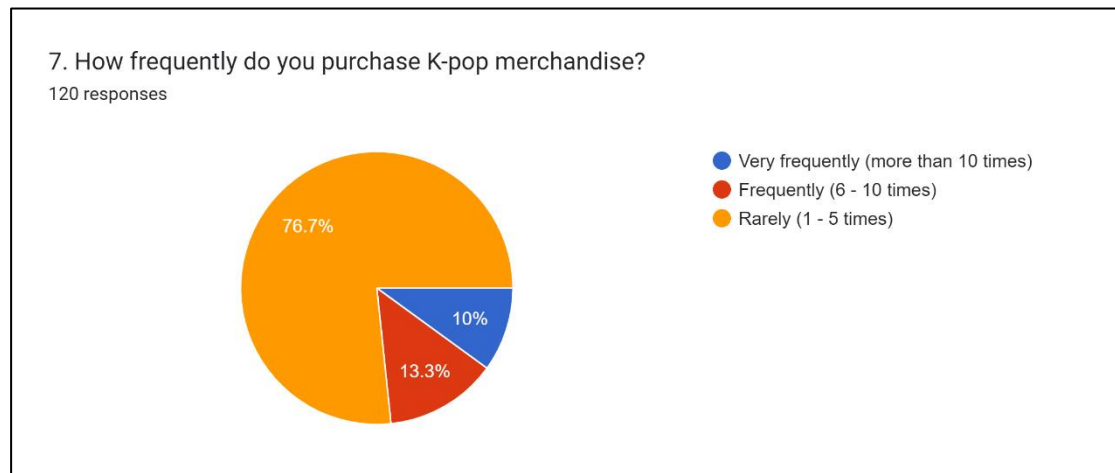


Figure 4.13: How frequently do you purchase K-pop merchandise?

There are 76.7% of the respondents (92 respondents) state that they rarely purchase K-pop merchandise which around 1 to 5 times and it is the highest percentage as shown in Figure 4.13. Furthermore, 13.3% of the respondents (16 respondents) state that they frequently purchase K-pop merchandise around 6 to 10 times and the lowest percentage is the 10% of the respondents (12 respondents) state that they purchase K-pop merchandise very frequently more than 10 times.

4.3 Section C: Factors that influence fans' purchase intention through K-pop idolization

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. [I would purchase K-pop merchandise because of my strong idolization of specific K-pop idol group.]					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	48	40.0	40.0	40.0
	Disagree	14	11.7	11.7	51.7
	Neutral	21	17.5	17.5	69.2
	Strongly Agree	21	17.5	17.5	86.7
	Strongly Disagree	16	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.14: I would purchase K-pop merchandise because of my strong idolization of specific K-pop idol group.

Figure 4.14 show that 40% of the respondents (48 respondents) agree they would purchase merchandise because of their strong idolization of specific K-pop idol group. Following by 17.5% each of the respondents (21 respondents) who are neutral and strongly agree with the statement. 13.3% of the respondents (16 respondents) strongly disagree and 11.7% of the respondents (14 respondents) disagree with the statement.

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. [I would purchase K-pop merchandise because of the visual appearance of the K-pop idol.]					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	44	36.7	36.7	36.7
	Disagree	15	12.5	12.5	49.2
	Neutral	30	25.0	25.0	74.2
	Strongly Agree	20	16.7	16.7	90.8
	Strongly Disagree	11	9.2	9.2	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.15: I would purchase K-pop merchandise because of the visual appearance of the K-pop idol.

Based on Figure 4.15, 36.7% of the respondents (44 respondents) agree that because of the visual appearance of some K-pop idol they would purchase for the merchandise. Other than that, there are 25% of the respondents (30 respondents) are neutral with the statement and 16.7% of the respondents (20 respondents) strongly agree with it. While the remaining of the respondents are disagree and strongly disagree that they would buy merchandise because of the visual of the K-pop idol which is 12.5% (15 respondents) and 9.2% (11 respondents) respectively.

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. [I would purchase K-pop merchandise especially during my favourite K-pop idol promotional period (such as comebacks, anniversaries).]					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	44	36.7	36.7	36.7
	Disagree	10	8.3	8.3	45.0
	Neutral	21	17.5	17.5	62.5
	Strongly Agree	29	24.2	24.2	86.7
	Strongly Disagree	16	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.16: I would purchase K-pop merchandise especially during my favourite K-pop idol promotional period (such as comebacks, anniversaries).

There are 36.7% of the respondents (44 respondents) agree they would purchase K-pop merchandise during their favourite K-pop idol promotional period as shown in Figure 4.16. 24.2% of the respondents (29 respondents) strongly agree with the statement and 17.5% of the respondents (21 respondents) are neutral. Besides, 13.3% of the respondents (16 respondents) strongly disagree they would purchase the merchandise during idol promotional period and 8.3% of the respondents (10 respondents) disagree with it.

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. [I would purchase K-pop merchandise because I have strong urges to have a merchandise of K-pop idol that I like.]					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	40	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Disagree	12	10.0	10.0	43.3
	Neutral	30	25.0	25.0	68.3
	Strongly Agree	18	15.0	15.0	83.3
	Strongly Disagree	20	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.17: I would purchase K-pop merchandise because I have strong urges to have a merchandise of K-pop idol that I like.

According to Figure 4.17, it shows that 33.3% of the respondents (40 respondents) agree they have strong urges to have a merchandise of K-pop idol they like. Following by 25% of the respondents (30 respondents) are neutral with the statement. The result of the remaining respondents is close to each other. There are 16.7% of respondents (20 respondents) strongly disagree, 15% (18 respondents) strongly agree and 10% (12 respondents) disagree.

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. [I would purchase K-pop merchandise especially bought multiple copies of the same album to collect different photocards of my favourite K-pop idol.]					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	23	19.2	19.2	19.2
	Disagree	24	20.0	20.0	39.2
	Neutral	26	21.7	21.7	60.8
	Strongly Agree	23	19.2	19.2	80.0
	Strongly Disagree	24	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.18: I would purchase K-pop merchandise especially bought multiple copies of the same album to collect different photocards of my favourite K-pop idol.

Figure 4.18 show the collected data related to respondents' agreement on they purchase K-pop merchandise especially bought multiple copies of the same album to collect different photocards of my favourite K-pop idol. The collected data are very close to each one. It shows that 21.7% (26 respondents) are neutral, 20% (24 respondents) are both disagree and strongly disagree respectively, and 19.2% (23 respondents) are both agree and strongly agree separately.

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. [I would purchase K-pop merchandise because I would like to have a collection of products from K-pop idol that I like.]					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	42	35.0	35.0	35.0
	Disagree	18	15.0	15.0	50.0
	Neutral	19	15.8	15.8	65.8
	Strongly Agree	23	19.2	19.2	85.0
	Strongly Disagree	18	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.19: I would purchase K-pop merchandise because I would like to have a collection of products from K-pop idol that I like.

There are 35% of the respondents (42 respondents) agree they purchase merchandise is because they like to have a collection of products from K-pop idol they like which is the highest percentage as shown in Figure 4.19. Following by 19.2% of the respondents (23 respondents) strongly agree with the statement. The result of the remaining of the respondents are close to each one which is 15.8% (19 respondents) are neutral, 15% (18 respondents) are both disagree and strongly disagree.

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. [I would purchase K-pop merchandise because I can have emotional connection with my favourite K-pop idol.]					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	40	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Disagree	20	16.7	16.7	50.0
	Neutral	26	21.7	21.7	71.7
	Strongly Agree	17	14.2	14.2	85.8
	Strongly Disagree	17	14.2	14.2	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.20: I would purchase K-pop merchandise because I can have emotional connection with my favourite K-pop idol.

According to Figure 4.20, the highest percentage is 33.3% where there are 40 respondents agree that they would purchase merchandise because they can have emotional connection with their favourite K-pop idol. Furthermore, 21.7% of the respondents (26 respondents) are neutral and 16.7% of the respondents (20 respondents) disagree with the statement. Respondents who are strongly agree and strongly disagree share the same percentage which is 14.2% (17 respondents) respectively.

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. [I would purchase K-pop merchandise because I want my favourite K-pop idol to be happy.]					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	30	25.0	25.0	25.0
	Disagree	23	19.2	19.2	44.2
	Neutral	32	26.7	26.7	70.8
	Strongly Agree	17	14.2	14.2	85.0
	Strongly Disagree	18	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.21: I would purchase K-pop merchandise because I want my favourite K-pop idol to be happy.

Figure 4.21 show the collected data on respondents would purchase K-pop merchandise because they want their favourite K-pop idol to be happy. As a result, there are 26.7% of the respondents (32 respondents) are neutral with the statement, 25% of

respondents (30 respondents) agree, 19.2% of respondents (23 respondents) disagree, 15% of respondents (18 respondents) strongly disagree and 14.2% of respondents (17 respondents) strongly agree.

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. [I would purchase K-pop merchandise such as concert ticket and fan meeting because I want to meet my favourite idol physically.]					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	41	34.2	34.2	34.2
	Disagree	10	8.3	8.3	42.5
	Neutral	23	19.2	19.2	61.7
	Strongly Agree	31	25.8	25.8	87.5
	Strongly Disagree	15	12.5	12.5	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.22: I would purchase K-pop merchandise such as concert ticket and fan meeting because I want to meet my favourite K-pop idol physically.

Most of the respondents agree that they would purchase K-pop merchandise such as concert ticket and fan meeting because they want to meet their favourite K-pop idol physically which is 34.2% (41 respondents) as refer to Figure 4.22. While 25.8% (31 respondents) of the respondents strongly agree with the statement and 19.2% of the respondents (23 respondents) are neutral. The rest of the respondents are strongly disagreed and disagree which is 12.5% (15 respondents) and 8.3% (10 respondents) respectively.

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. [I would purchase K-pop merchandise because I would like to help my favourite K-pop idol break their record of sales.]					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	46	38.3	38.3	38.3
	Disagree	20	16.7	16.7	55.0
	Neutral	26	21.7	21.7	76.7
	Strongly Agree	12	10.0	10.0	86.7
	Strongly Disagree	16	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.23: I would purchase K-pop merchandise because I would like to help my favourite K-pop idol break their record of sales.

Based on Figure 4.23, the majority of the respondents which is 38.3% (46 respondents) agree that they would purchase K-pop merchandise to help their favourite K-pop idol break their record of sales. 21.7% of the respondents (26 respondents) are neutral, 16.7% of the respondents (20 respondents) disagree and 13.3% of the respondents (16 respondents) strongly disagree with the statement. Respondents who are strongly agree has reach the lowest percentage which is only 10% (12 respondents).

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. [I would purchase K-pop merchandise because the products are endorsed by my favourite idol.]					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	38	31.7	31.7	31.7
	Disagree	14	11.7	11.7	43.3
	Neutral	32	26.7	26.7	70.0
	Strongly Agree	21	17.5	17.5	87.5
	Strongly Disagree	15	12.5	12.5	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.24: I would purchase K-pop merchandise because the products are endorsed by my favourite idol.

31.7% of the respondents (38 respondents) and 26.7% of the respondents (32 respondents) are agree and strongly agree that they would purchase merchandise

endorsed by their favourite idol as shown in Figure 4.24. The remaining of the respondents are very close to each other such as 17.5% (21 respondents) are neutral, 12.5% (15 respondents) are strongly disagree and 11.7% (14 respondents) are disagree.

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. [I would purchase K-pop merchandise because my favourite K-pop idol uses them.]					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	34	28.3	28.3	28.3
	Disagree	20	16.7	16.7	45.0
	Neutral	33	27.5	27.5	72.5
	Strongly Agree	20	16.7	16.7	89.2
	Strongly Disagree	13	10.8	10.8	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.25: I would purchase K-pop merchandise because my favourite K-pop idol uses them.

Figure 4.25 show the collected data of respondents would purchase merchandise because their favourite K-pop idol uses them. The respondents who are agree and neutral are close to each other which is 28.3% (34 respondents) and 27.5% (33 respondents). On the other hand, respondents who are disagree and strongly agree has the same percentage which is 16.7% (20 respondents) while respondents who are strongly disagree with the statement has the lowest percentage which is 10.8% (13 respondents).

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. [I would purchase K-pop merchandise because I often follow the social media accounts of K-pop idol that I like are promoting the products.]					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	37	30.8	30.8	30.8
	Disagree	22	18.3	18.3	49.2
	Neutral	27	22.5	22.5	71.7
	Strongly Agree	19	15.8	15.8	87.5
	Strongly Disagree	15	12.5	12.5	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.26: I would purchase K-pop merchandise because I often follow the social media accounts of K-pop idol that I like are promoting the products.

Refer to Figure 4.26, 30.8% of the respondents (37 respondents) agree that due to their favourite K-pop idol promoting the products on their social media account make them willing to purchase the product. 22.5% of the respondents (27 respondents) are neutral and 18.3% of the respondents (22 respondents) disagree with the statement. Moreover, 15.8% of the respondents (19 respondents) are strongly agree and 12.5% of the respondents (15 respondents) are strongly disagree.

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. [I would purchase K-pop merchandise because I consider it as a way to show my love and support to my favourite K-pop idol.]					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	49	40.8	40.8	40.8
	Disagree	11	9.2	9.2	50.0
	Neutral	28	23.3	23.3	73.3
	Strongly Agree	18	15.0	15.0	88.3
	Strongly Disagree	14	11.7	11.7	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.27: I would purchase K-pop merchandise because I consider it as a way to show my love and support to my favourite K-pop idol.

Based on Figure 4.27, majority of the respondents which is 40.8% (49 respondents) consider purchase merchandise as a way to show their love and support to

their idol. 23.3% of the respondents (28 respondents) are neutral and 15% of the respondents (18 respondents) are strongly agree. Respondents who are strongly disagree and disagree are 11.7% (14 respondents) and 9.2% (11 respondents) respectively.

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. [I would purchase K-pop merchandise because I believe this is one of the way to let me know my favourite K-pop idol better.]					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	32	26.7	26.7	26.7
	Disagree	23	19.2	19.2	45.8
	Neutral	26	21.7	21.7	67.5
	Strongly Agree	23	19.2	19.2	86.7
	Strongly Disagree	16	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.28: I would purchase K-pop merchandise because I believe this is one of the way to let me know my favourite K-pop idol better.

Figure 4.28 show the collected data on respondents purchase merchandise because they believe this is one of the way to let them know their idol better are very close to each other. Respondents who are agree is 26.7% (32 respondents), 21.7% (26 respondents) are neutral, both disagree and strongly agree are the same which is 19.2% (23 respondents) and 13.3% (16 respondents) are strongly disagree.

4.4 Section D: Relationship between K-pop idolization and fans' purchase intention

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. [My decision to purchase the merchandise will depend on how much I like my idol.]					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	52	43.3	43.3	43.3
	Disagree	8	6.7	6.7	50.0
	Neutral	14	11.7	11.7	61.7
	Strongly Agree	36	30.0	30.0	91.7
	Strongly Disagree	10	8.3	8.3	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.29: My decision to purchase the merchandise will depend on how much I like my idol.

Based on Figure 4.29, respondents who are agree on their decision to purchase the merchandise will depend on how much they like their idol is the highest percentage among other which is 43.3% (52 respondents). Following by 30% of the respondents (36 respondents) strongly agree with the statement. Then, 11.7% (14 respondents) are neutral, 8.3% (10 respondents) strongly disagree and 6.7% (8 respondents) disagree.

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. [My decision to purchase the merchandise will depend on the attractiveness of the idol.]					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	57	47.5	47.5	47.5
	Disagree	11	9.2	9.2	56.7
	Neutral	18	15.0	15.0	71.7
	Strongly Agree	30	25.0	25.0	96.7
	Strongly Disagree	4	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.30: My decision to purchase the merchandise will depend on the attractiveness of the idol.

The majority of the respondents agree with the statement as the attractiveness of the idol would influence their decision to purchase the merchandise which is the highest percentage 47.5% (57 respondents) in the collected data as shown in Figure 4.30. 25% of the respondents (30 respondents) strongly agree with it and 15% of the respondents (18 respondents) are neutral. The rest of the respondents who are disagree and strongly disagree occupied the lowest percentage which are 9.2% (11 respondents) and 3.3% (4 respondents) respectively.

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. [My decision to purchase the merchandise will depend on the trustworthiness of the idol.]					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	63	52.5	52.5	52.5
	Disagree	6	5.0	5.0	57.5
	Neutral	24	20.0	20.0	77.5
	Strongly Agree	21	17.5	17.5	95.0
	Strongly Disagree	6	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.31: My decision to purchase the merchandise will depend on the trustworthiness of the idol.

There are 63 respondents out of 120 respondents (52.5%) are agree that their decision to purchase the merchandise will depend on the trustworthiness of the idol as refer to Figure 4.31. Other than that, 24 respondents (20%) are neutral and 21 respondents (17.5%) are strongly agree with the statement. Respondents who are disagree and strongly disagree has the same amount and is the least number of people which is 6 respondents (5%) respectively.

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. [My decision to purchase the merchandise will depend on the personality of the idol.]					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	47	39.2	39.2	39.2
	Disagree	5	4.2	4.2	43.3
	Neutral	29	24.2	24.2	67.5
	Strongly Agree	34	28.3	28.3	95.8
	Strongly Disagree	5	4.2	4.2	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.32: My decision to purchase the merchandise will depend on the personality of the idol.

According to Figure 4.32, most of the respondents agree and strongly agree on the statement where the personality of the idol will influence their purchase decision. There are 47 respondents (39.2%) agree, 34 respondents (28.3%) strongly agree and 29 respondents (24.2%) are neutral. The rest of the respondents has the same frequency for disagree and strongly disagree which is 5 respondents (4.2%) for each option.

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. [My decision to purchase the merchandise will depend on the talent of the idol.]					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	46	38.3	38.3	38.3
	Disagree	10	8.3	8.3	46.7
	Neutral	25	20.8	20.8	67.5
	Strongly Agree	32	26.7	26.7	94.2
	Strongly Disagree	7	5.8	5.8	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.33: My decision to purchase the merchandise will depend on the talent of the idol.

Figure 4.33 show the collected data on respondents' decision to purchase the merchandise will depend on the talent of the idol. There are 46 respondents (38.3%) agree, 32 respondents (26.7%) strongly agree and 25 respondents (20.8%) are neutral

while the remaining respondents has the least number which is 10 respondents (8.3%) disagree and 7 respondents (5.8%) strongly disagree.

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. [In support of my favourite K-pop idol, I will purchase the merchandise regardless of the price.]					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	27	22.5	22.5	22.5
	Disagree	25	20.8	20.8	43.3
	Neutral	33	27.5	27.5	70.8
	Strongly Agree	13	10.8	10.8	81.7
	Strongly Disagree	22	18.3	18.3	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.34: In support of my favourite K-pop idol, I will purchase the merchandise regardless of the price.

Based on Figure 4.34, the number respondents who are neutral on the statement that they will purchase the merchandise regardless of the price are slightly higher than others which is 27.5% (33 respondents). There are 22.5% of the respondents (27 respondents) agree with the statement while 20.8% of the respondents (25 respondents) disagree with it. The respondents who are strongly disagree is also more than respondents who are strongly agree which is 18.3% (22 respondents) and 10.8% (13 respondents).

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. [In support of my favourite K-pop idol, I will purchase the merchandise regardless of the quality.]					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	39	32.5	32.5	32.5
	Disagree	26	21.7	21.7	54.2
	Neutral	29	24.2	24.2	78.3
	Strongly Agree	8	6.7	6.7	85.0
	Strongly Disagree	18	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.35: In support of my favourite K-pop idol, I will purchase the merchandise regardless of the quality.

There are 32.5% of the respondents (39 respondents) agree that they will purchase merchandise regardless of the quality as shown in Figure 4.35. Following by 24.2% of the respondents (29 respondents) are neutral and 21.7% of the respondents (26 respondents) disagree with the statement. Respondents who are strongly agree is the lowest percentage which is 6.7% (8 respondents) and 15% of the respondents (18 respondents) are strongly disagree.

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. [In support of my favourite K-pop idol, I will purchase the merchandise regardless of the authenticity.]					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	26	21.7	21.7	21.7
	Disagree	25	20.8	20.8	42.5
	Neutral	36	30.0	30.0	72.5
	Strongly Agree	13	10.8	10.8	83.3
	Strongly Disagree	20	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.36: In support of my favourite K-pop idol, I will purchase the merchandise regardless of the authenticity.

Figure 4.36 show there are 30% of the respondents (36 respondents) are neutral that they will purchase the merchandise regardless of the authenticity. The percentage of respondents who are agree and disagree are very close to each other which is 21.7% (26 respondents) and 20.8% (25 respondents). 16.7% of the respondents (20 respondents) are strongly disagree which is more than respondents who are strongly agree 10.8% (13 respondents).

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. [In support of my favourite K-pop idol, I will purchase the merchandise regardless of the usefulness.]					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	37	30.8	30.8	30.8
	Disagree	21	17.5	17.5	48.3
	Neutral	30	25.0	25.0	73.3
	Strongly Agree	15	12.5	12.5	85.8
	Strongly Disagree	17	14.2	14.2	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.37: In support of my favourite K-pop idol, I will purchase the merchandise regardless of the usefulness.

30.8% of the respondents (37 respondents) agree that they will purchase the merchandise regardless of the usefulness as shown in Figure 4.37. 25% of the respondents (30 respondents) are neutral with the statement. The remaining respondents are close to each other which is 17.5% (21 respondents) disagree, 14.2% (17 respondents) strongly disagree and 12.5% (15 respondents) strongly agree.

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. [In support of my favourite K-pop idol, I will purchase the merchandise regardless of the exclusivity.]					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	40	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Disagree	15	12.5	12.5	45.8
	Neutral	30	25.0	25.0	70.8
	Strongly Agree	15	12.5	12.5	83.3
	Strongly Disagree	20	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.38: In support of my favourite K-pop idol, I will purchase the merchandise regardless of the exclusivity.

Figure 4.38 show the collected data of respondent will purchase the merchandise regardless of the exclusivity. There are 33.3% (40 respondents) agree, 25% (30 respondents) neutral and 16.7% (20 respondents) strongly disagree. Respondents

who are disagree and strongly agree has the same percentage which is 12.5% (15 respondents) respectively.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Limitation, Recommendation and Conclusion

5.0 Introduction

Based on the data gathered for Chapter 4, this chapter discusses the study's results, which provides a summary of the analysis. This chapter also discusses the study's limitations, conclusion, and recommendations for research in the future.

5.1 Discussion

The data discussed in Chapter 4 clarifies the complicated connection between K-pop idolization and fans' tendency towards making purchases. The results demonstrate the significant influence of idolization within the K-pop fandom and offer fascinating insights into the elements that motivate fans to participate in merchandise consumption.

In order to begin discussing purchasing intention, it is important to gain an understanding of the respondents' demographic profile. Throughout the survey, young adults between the ages of 21 and 23 make up the majority of the responders, they are primarily female and of Chinese ethnicity. The majority of responders are students who are from undergraduate, suggesting a young and diversified sample in terms of educational background.

The results of the psychographic research show how knowledgeable and passionate of the respondents are about K-pop. A large number of the respondents acknowledged their familiarity with K-pop and a significant segment indicated a positive attitude towards it. Additionally, a significant number of respondents actively

purchase K-pop merchandise, follow K-pop idols and regularly consume K-pop content on social media platforms.

According to the research, fans' purchasing intentions in the context of K-pop idolization are influenced by a variety of factors. Remarkably, the respondents demonstrate an overwhelming desire to purchase merchandise as a way of demonstrating their loyalty and favour for their favourite K-pop idol. The large proportion of respondents who believe that purchasing merchandise is a means of expressing their desire to support and show love for their idols is reflective of this sentiment. As according to Lestari & Tiarawati (2020), it stated that K-pop fans believe that purchasing album or other merchandise of their idols is appropriate, even though it's not required, as a means of showing them how much they love. K-pop fans are extraordinarily devoted and determined to support their idols to the fullest extent possible regardless of the cost (Arisandi et al., 2023).

Furthermore, it turns out that K-pop idols' personalities and visual attractiveness play an important role in influencing fans' intentions to buy. A large number of respondents' state that their decision to purchase merchandise is influenced by their idols' personalities and their attractiveness. This can be seen from numerous fashion firms are promoting Korean celebrities in their advertising (Malaysia, 2023). There is a one-way relationship between purchase intentions and brand ambassadors in which using brand ambassadors will enhance consumers' intent to buy (Rosalina & Ngantung, 2022). Therefore, celebrity endorsements serve as effective brand ambassadors for many advertisers looking to connect with their target markets. As a result, K-pop fans would purchase products based on the attractiveness of their idols. This emphasizes how influential idol charisma and image are in influencing fans' purchasing decisions.

Moreover, it is impossible to ignore the impact of K-pop idol promotional activities and marketing events like comebacks and anniversaries effect on consumers' purchasing intention. Many respondents acknowledge that they are more likely to purchase merchandise when their favourite K-pop idols are promoting their album during their promotional periods. When their favourite idol releases a new song, K-pop fans would show their love and support by smashing the record for the most album sales both digitally and physically (Irena et al., 2022). They have invested time, money, and energy into purchasing digital music, streaming videos, and other forms of entertainment (Chenyue, 2023). This demonstrates how well is the marketing strategies work to increase consumer demand among K-pop fans.

Apart from that, K-pop idols and K-pop fans do have a special relationship that prompts fans to spend money to buy their merchandise because of their favourite K-pop idols to maintain their relationship. According to Thakkar and Lortie (2020), they have stated that teenagers' main need is to feel completely understood and supported while an idol is a person who may offer emotional support, empowering messages and life inspiration. It's interesting to point out that K-pop idolization stimulates an emotional connection and a sense of belonging that are key factors in increasing merchandise purchasing. A considerable proportion of the respondents believe that purchasing merchandise could enables them to form a feeling of connection with their favourite K-pop idols. This has proven that K-pop fans and K-pop idols have a relationship that is interconnected between themselves. According to Chenyue (2023), Korean Wave's ability to connect emotionally has encouraged its passionate supporters to make repeat purchases and expanded the number of its consumers through planned global expansion. Regardless of elements like price, authenticity or quality, fans are financially driven to support their idols because of this emotional connection.

The study indicates by highlighting the significant impact that K-pop idolization has on K-pop fans' purchasing intention. Fans' engagement in spending on merchandise is motivated by their deep emotional attachment to K-pop idols as well as the attractiveness of their persona and appearance. Additionally, social media presence and promotional activities further strengthen fans' willingness to support their favourite K-pop idol by purchasing their merchandise. In order to optimize marketing tactics and meet the varied requirements and preferences of K-pop fans, industry stakeholders must have an in-depth awareness of these dynamics.

5.2 Limitation

There are a few limitations in this study that restrict the research. Firstly, most of the respondents in this study are university students in the age range of 21 to 23 years old. Among the 120 respondents, 85 respondents are between the ages of 21 to 23 years old and 102 respondents are university students who are undergraduate. There are not many respondents from other age groups and educational background. This has result in a lack of opinions from respondents of different ages and educational backgrounds, because this group of respondents cannot fully represent the ideas of all K-pop fans.

Furthermore, the majority of the respondents are students, their incomes are relatively low. This can result in the data of this study not being as accurate, as lower income levels correspond to lower purchasing power compared to others.

Moreover, there is no representation from Malay or Indian respondents in this study as 100% of the respondents in this study are Chinese. This indicate that this study lacks the perspectives and opinions of Malay and Indian K-pop fans. In a country where Malays make up the majority, its crucial to understand how Malay and Indian perceive

K-pop idolization and its impacts on their purchasing habits. After all, different ethnicities have different lifestyles, perspectives and attitudes towards their purchasing intention, Chinese respondents cannot represent all K-pop fans, nor can they represent the opinions of Malay and Indian fans.

5.3 Recommendation

In order to improve the quality of relevant studies, there are a few recommendations for future research that researchers can consider. As mentioned above, to get more diverse spectrum of research, we need opinions from people of other age groups such as working adults or adults. Therefore, the survey questionnaire needs to be sent to people of different ages than merely university students to gather their response for future study. Researcher can distribute the questionnaire to newly hired employees or working professionals who are K-pop fans to gain insight into their viewpoints. This is because people from different socioeconomic backgrounds have varying incomes, the responses received will provide more targeted insights into their views on how K-pop idol influence their purchase intention. This would be helpful to those companies that are selling K-pop merchandise as they can implement different sales strategies suited to various age groups.

In addition, researchers also can distribute the survey questionnaire to other ethnicities who are also K-pop fans besides Chinese to gather their responses in future study. This is important to obtain a more comprehensive range of views because the merchandise is not only targeted at Chinese K-pop fans but at all K-pop fans regardless of their ethnicities. Researcher can use a variety of methods to collect response from people of all ethnicities. For instance, in comparison to private institutions, distributing

the survey questionnaire to the students at national government universities can help to reach a greater number of Malay and Indian respondents, which will result in a higher number of respondents from various ethnic backgrounds. To target people who are working, survey questionnaire can be distribute to company where there is a higher number of Malay or Indian employees to collect data. By doing this, researcher can obtain responses from different age groups and ethnicities, thus it could enhance the quality and accuracy of the future study.

5.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the study was aimed at understanding the complex relationship between K-pop idolization and fans' purchasing intentions and it provided a number of crucial new findings. The desire of fans to consume merchandise as a means of expressing their love and devotion to their preferred K-pop idols is motivated by a strong emotional connection and influences their purchasing decisions. Furthermore, fans' purchase intentions are greatly influenced by the personalities, attractive appearances, and promotional activities of K-pop idols with social media playing a reinforcing role. These results highlight how crucial it is for industry stakeholders to understand the connection between K-pop idolization and consumer behaviour in order to properly optimize their promotional activities. In the future, other studies might examine this connection in a variety of demographic and cultural contexts, which would deepen our understanding of contemporary consumer behaviour in entertainment and popular culture.

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Appendix A (questionnaire)

Section A: Demographic

1. Age
 - ☐ 18 - 20
 - ☐ 21 - 23
 - ☐ 24 - 26
2. Gender
 - ☐ Male
 - ☐ Female
3. Race
 - ☐ Malay
 - ☐ Chinese
 - ☐ Indian
 - ☐ Others
4. Educational Background
 - ☐ Primary (UPSR, etc)
 - ☐ Secondary (PMR, PT3, SPM, etc)
 - ☐ Post-Secondary (STPM, UEC, A-Level, Foundation, Diploma, etc)
 - ☐ Undergraduate (Degree, etc)
 - ☐ Postgraduate (Master, PhD, etc)
5. Occupation
 - ☐ Student
 - ☐ Unemployed
 - ☐ Employed
 - ☐ Self-employed
6. Monthly Income
 - ☐ Student
 - ☐ Unemployed
 - ☐ Employed
 - ☐ Self-employed

Section B: Psychographic

1. Do you know K-pop?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
2. Do you like K-pop?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
3. How often do you watch K-pop content on social media platforms?
 - ☐ 1 – 5 times per week
 - ☐ 6 – 10 times per week
 - ☐ More than 10 times per week
4. Do you follow any K-pop idol?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
5. How frequently do you browse any news related to K-pop idol you like?
 - ☐ 1 – 5 times per week
 - ☐ 6 – 10 times per week
 - ☐ More than 10 times per week
6. Have you ever purchased any merchandise or product related to your favourite K-pop idol? (Example: albums, photocards, accessories, clothing, skin care product, concert ticket)
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
7. How frequently do you purchase K-pop merchandise?
 - ☐ Very frequently (more than 10 times)
 - ☐ Frequently (6 – 10 times)
 - ☐ Rarely (1 – 5 times)

Section C: Factors that influence fans' purchasing intention through K-pop idolization

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below.

5-point Likert Scale

(1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree)

NO		1	2	3	4	5
1	I would purchase K-pop merchandise because of my strong idolization of specific K-pop idol group.					
2	I would purchase K-pop merchandise because of the visual appearance of the K-pop idol.					
3	I would purchase K-pop merchandise especially during my favourite K-pop idol promotional period (such as comebacks, anniversaries).					
4	I would purchase K-pop merchandise because I have strong urges to have a merchandise of K-pop idol that I like.					
5	I would purchase K-pop merchandise especially bought multiple copies of the same album to collect different photocards of my favourite K-pop idol.					
6	I would purchase K-pop merchandise because I would like to have a collection of products from K-pop idol that I like.					
7	I would purchase K-pop merchandise because I can have emotional connection with my favourite K-pop idol.					
8	I would purchase K-pop merchandise because I want my favourite K-pop idol to be happy.					
9	I would purchase K-pop merchandise such as concert ticket and fan meeting because I want to meet my favourite K-pop idol physically.					
10	I would purchase K-pop merchandise because I would like to help my favourite K-pop idol break their record of sales.					
11	I would purchase K-pop merchandise because the products are endorsed by my favourite idol.					
12	I would purchase K-pop merchandise because my favourite K-pop idol uses them.					
13	I would purchase K-pop merchandise because I often follow the social media accounts of K-pop idol that I like are promoting the products.					
14	I would purchase K-pop merchandise because I consider it as a way to show my love and support to my favourite K-pop idol.					
15	I would purchase K-pop merchandise because I believe this is one of the way to let me know my favourite K-pop idol better.					

Section D: Relationship between K-pop idolization and fans' purchase intention

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below.

5-point Likert Scale

(1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree)

NO		1	2	3	4	5
1	My decision to purchase the merchandise will depend on how much I like my idol.					
2	My decision to purchase the merchandise will depend on the attractiveness of the idol.					
3	My decision to purchase the merchandise will depend on the trustworthiness of the idol.					
4	My decision to purchase the merchandise will depend on the personality of the idol.					
5	My decision to purchase the merchandise will depend on the talent of the idol.					
6	In support of my favourite K-pop idol, I will purchase the merchandise regardless of the price.					
7	In support of my favourite K-pop idol, I will purchase the merchandise regardless of the quality.					
8	In support of my favourite K-pop idol, I will purchase the merchandise regardless of the authenticity.					
9	In support of my favourite K-pop idol, I will purchase the merchandise regardless of the usefulness.					
10	In support of my favourite K-pop idol, I will purchase the merchandise regardless of the exclusivity.					