



EXPLORING THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE PURCHASE INTENTION
OF K-POP FANS IN MALAYSIA

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APPROVAL FORM

This research paper attached hereto, entitled “Exploring the effect of social media on the purchase intention of K-Pop Fans in Malaysia” prepared and submitted by “Chiah Wei Wei” in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Communication (Hons) Broadcasting is hereby accepted.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the factors that influence purchase intentions among K-pop fans in Malaysia, with a particular emphasis on the effect of social media. As K-pop develops into a global cultural phenomenon, aesthetics, emotional ties, online community interactions, and idol endorsements influence fan purchase decisions. A quantitative survey of 60 Malaysian K-pop fans aged 18-30 revealed that visually appealing merchandise designs, idols' social media activity, and fan involvement on digital platforms all had a substantial influence on purchase decisions. Emotional connection and the desire to support idols appeared as major motivators, whereas price and perceived value had an important influence on consumer behaviour, particularly among student respondents. Despite limitations in sample size and demographic diversity, this study offers helpful details for marketers and entertainment companies looking to increase interaction with K-pop fans. Future research should incorporate a larger sample size and a more in-depth look at gender and employment disparities in fan purchase intention.

Keywords: K-pop, K-pop Idol, Purchase Intention, K-pop merchandise, Comeback, Brand Ambassadors

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction of the study

K-pop (Korean pop music) has evolved as a major force in worldwide entertainment, distinguished by energetic performances, visually appealing music videos, and intensively constructed characteristics. K-pop has evolved from a localized phenomenon to a global cultural and commercial force, led by groups like BTS, BLACKPINK, and Seventeen. This expansion has been fostered by passionate fanbases, known as "stans," who actively participate in online groups, buy goods, and interact with idols on social media (Parc and Kim, 2020). The purpose of this study is to look at the elements that impact K-pop fans' purchase decisions, specifically the function of social media and fan communities.

1.1 Background of Study

K-pop, which stands for Korean popular music, has become a worldwide hit, grabbing the hearts of millions with its distinct combination of song, visual aesthetics, and performing artistry. This wave of cultural impact, known as the Hallyu (Korean Wave), began in the late 1990s and early 2000s, propelled mostly by the international popularity of Korean dramas and films. K-dramas, such as "Winter Sonata" and "My Love from the Star", exposed worldwide audiences to Korean culture, fashion, and music, with many having K-pop soundtracks or cameos by K-pop celebrities (Bok-Rae, 2015). According to Sari (2018), the success of K-pop goods speaks for itself, but it was not an accident; it was and continues to be planned by the country's culture

ministry and government in order to enhance awareness of the country and deploy soft power in international affairs. This collaboration between K-dramas and K-pop was essential in promoting the latter to worldwide markets, allowing K-pop to capitalize on the global popularity of Korean television and film.

The growth of K-pop as a worldwide cultural force cannot be addressed without considering the significance of technology, especially at an age when the internet and social media have profoundly altered the entertainment environment. Prior to the introduction of platforms such as YouTube and Twitter, music distribution was geographically constrained, with international listeners frequently having limited access to foreign media. However, fast technological innovation and the widespread availability of high-speed internet have enabled the seamless interchange of material across borders, allowing K-pop to overcome language obstacles and geographical limitations (Oh and Lee, 2014). Social media platforms have given K-pop companies the ideal tools to engage with worldwide audiences in real time, ensuring that celebrities' work is not only accessible but also extensively shared and discussed throughout the world. For example, the music video for BTS's "Dynamite" broke many YouTube records, receiving over 100 million views in 24 hours, illustrating the strength of worldwide fan involvement through social media. The algorithm-driven exposure of K-pop material on these platforms, together with fans' passion to share and promote their favorite celebrities, has greatly aided K-pop's broad popularity.

Furthermore, K-pop is mastering the skill of directly engaging fans via live broadcasts, social media posts, and interactive platforms such as Weverse, Bubble and Phoning. As K-pop grows and evolves, it has expanded into a multifaceted cultural phenomenon that includes not just music but also fashion, lifestyle, and live activities (Mohammad and Saifurrahman, 2023). These platforms enable celebrities to interact in real time with followers, providing unique content and

personal updates that foster closeness and connection. According to Santos and Marques (2022), New idols strive for worldwide recognition from the start and utilize specific methods to establish a two-way communication system with their fanbases, allowing for a more intimate interaction between both sides. The seamless integration of technology and fan engagement has enabled K-pop to maintain a regular presence on social media, contributing to an online culture in which K-pop continues to be a dominant force in global entertainment.

1.2 Problem Statement

As K-pop's global appeal grows, stimulated by technical improvements and the spread of digital broadcasting channels, understanding the elements that impact fans' purchasing intentions becomes increasingly important. Social media sites like YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter play an important part in how fans connect with K-pop celebrities and items. These portals not only provide fans exclusive material, but they also function as effective instruments for idol promotional activities. However, there is still a lack of information about how these broadcasts, whether live-streamed events, unboxing videos, or influencer endorsements, affect consumers' purchase decisions. This study will look at how social media broadcasting influences K-pop fans' purchase decisions, particularly when it comes to idol products.

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To identify the factors that influence the purchase intention of K-pop fans.
2. The affection on social media and online communities toward the purchasing intention of K-Pop fans.

1.4 Research question

1. What factors influence the purchase intention of K-pop fans?
2. How do social media and online communities affect the purchasing intention of K-Pop fans?

1.5 Significant of Study

This research is especially important in the field of broadcasting and social media studies. As broadcasting moves more towards digital platforms, it alters how fans consume items and engage with their idols. This study will look at how digital broadcasts impact purchase intention. The findings of this study can assist broadcasters and content makers learn how to better engage consumers with customized promotional content. In particular, by investigating the link between K-pop idol broadcasts and fan purchase behavior, the study can offer insight on how broadcasting techniques influence item sales, making this research important to both content creators and marketers.

1.6 Key Definition Concept

K-pop

K-Pop music combines dance-pop and pop elements, with lyrics in Korean and Western languages (Nastiti, 2010; Ardhiyansyah, 2021). K-Pop is part of the Korean Wave, a trend characterized by the success of South Korea's entertainment and music industries, including television dramas and music (Qadri, 2024).

K-pop Idol

A k-pop idol is a performer in Korean pop music or the K-pop industry. These artists might be either part of a K-pop group or solo performers. Before becoming full-fledged K-pop idols, they typically work as trainees for Korean entertainment organizations, where they receive intensive training to develop their singing, dancing, and foreign language skills (Toyryla, 2022).

Purchase Intention

Initially, purchase intention was defined as users' perceived likelihood to engage in specific behaviors. When people express interest in a product or service, it indicates a purchasing intention, whether long-term or short-term. Positive feedback from consumers of brand products or services can lead to increased purchase intentions (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1972; Al-Ja'afreh, 2020).

K-pop merchandise

K-Pop merchandise have been accessible since the 1990s, when the first generation of K-Pop idols launched. It is a product that is appealing, entertaining, liked or worn by K-Pop idols, functional, and even limited edition (Jin Kim et al., 2018; Qadri, 2024). K-Pop merchandise is made to allow fans to express themselves while they support their idols. K-Pop fans typically acquire merchandise relating to their idols, including as albums, light sticks, photo cards, and more (Ardhiyansyah et al., 2021; Qadri, 2024).

Comeback

When performing artists makes a return with a new song (Machado, 2022)

Brand Ambassadors

A brand ambassador is a person who promotes a brand; these persons are frequently well-known public figures or even regular citizens known as ordinary endorsers (Ahmad et al, 2019; Bismo et al, 2024).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The meteoric ascent of K-pop, or Korean popular music, is one of the most major developments in worldwide pop culture in the 21st century. What began as a localized music genre in South Korea has evolved into a global cultural phenomenon as a result of media digitization and intelligent social media use. Young adult fans, particularly in Southeast Asia, have played a key role in K-pop's worldwide spread, connecting with idols and content via various online platforms. In Malaysia, the K-pop fandom is tightly connected with social media, which has a significant impact on fan behaviors, including their intents to purchase K-pop-related products. This literature review investigates the many factors that influence the purchasing intentions of young adult K-pop fans in Malaysia, with a particular emphasis on the function of social media. By investigating K-pop's worldwide development, the importance of merchandise in K-pop fandom, and the role of social media, peer groups, emotional connections, and idol endorsements, we acquire a thorough knowledge of the variables driving K-pop fans' consumption habits in Malaysia.

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is the possibility that a customer would purchase a specific product or service based on a number of criteria, including product attraction, brand loyalty, and social influences. In the case of K-pop, purchase intention is particularly tied to fans' emotional investment in their favorite idols, social dynamics within the fandom, and promotional methods used by entertainment corporations on social media platforms. According to Soo (2020), K-pop

fans usually exhibit enhanced love and dedication to their idols, which closely correlates with higher buy intentions for official stuff like records, concert merchandise, and branded accessories. These purchases are not just acts of consumerism, but also demonstrations of fan identification and allegiance to the K-pop idol they admire.

In Malaysia, young adult fans frequently interact with their idols via social media platforms, which serve as informative and commercial hubs, exposing them to marketing campaigns advertising merchandise. Nasuhah (2020) discovered that fans who follow their favorite idols on media such as Instagram and Twitter are more likely to create emotional attachments to these idols, resulting in higher consumer engagement. This link between emotional connection and purchase intention is enhanced by fans' desire to own special or limited-edition products, which increases their connection to the fanbase and brings them closer to their idols. Thus, purchase intention in K-pop is influenced by a mix of emotional involvement and social connections within fan networks, both of which are enhanced by the digital realm.

K-pop and its Global Expansion

K-pop's worldwide development is a multidimensional process motivated in large part by South Korea's digital advancements and purposeful use of social media platforms to reach foreign audiences. Parc and Kim (2020) suggest that the digitalization of media has been critical in breaking down conventional regional and cultural boundaries, allowing K-pop to reach new demographics throughout the globe. Platforms like YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram have played a vital role in increasing K-pop's global reach. These platforms enable fans from all over the world to consume content or merchandise concurrently, participate in global fan events, and interact directly with their favorite celebrities.

According to Lee Sangjoon and Nornes (2015), the advent of the Korean Wave, also known as Hallyu 2.0, has aided K-pop's growth. K-pop's global popularity is evidenced by its large fan base, which spans Southeast Asia, Europe, and North America in addition to South Korea. Malaysia, being part of Southeast Asia, has been especially welcoming to K-pop, with local fan communities actively connecting with idols and participating in worldwide fan events. Jin (2016) addresses the importance of transnational cultural power in the age of social media, underlining that K-pop has evolved into a potent cultural force capable of influencing not just entertainment consumption but also fashion, language, and social conventions among its global fans.

The popularity of K-pop in Malaysia has been fostered by the ease with which it can be found on social media. Malaysian fans may keep up with worldwide K-pop trends and engage in real-time conversations with idols and other fans. This internet link has enabled K-pop to thrive in Malaysia, where it has developed a loyal base of young people drawn to the genre's particular style, high production qualities, and emotionally relevant content.

The Role of Merchandise in K-pop Fandom

Merchandise is important in K-pop fandom because it allows fans to display their dedication and appreciation for their idols in concrete ways. K-pop merchandise includes CDs, picture books, concert items, and limited-edition items, allowing fans to possess a piece of their favorite idol's brand and image. According to Chadborn et al (2017), fans frequently perceive merchandise as more than simply things; they consider these items as representations of their connection to K-pop culture and their own identity as fans.

For many fans, purchasing official goods is a means to show their support for their idols and consolidate their place in the fan community. In K-pop, the act of purchasing items is

frequently tied to the broader fan culture of involvement and cooperation. Fans may plan group purchases, record unboxing videos, and show off their collections on social media, all of which contribute to a stronger feeling of community among fans. According to Soo (2020), item sales are a vital source of revenue for K-pop companies and idols, making a considerable contribution to the industry's overall success. In Malaysia, fans frequently use social media channels to acquire official products, either directly from agencies or through fan-organized group orders.

According to Ezani (2020), having merchandise is a key part of the Malaysian K-pop fan experience since it connects them to their favorite stars and the worldwide K-pop community. Social media sites like Instagram and Twitter play an important role in this process since they are the major channels for fans to find new item launches, engage in giveaways, and keep updated about exclusive products. Thus, merchandise in K-pop fandom is more than just a commercial commodity; it is also a sign of fan commitment and identity, which is inextricably linked to the fanbase's social dynamic.

Social media as a Promotional Tool for K-pop Merchandise

Social media has evolved into a significant advertising tool for K-pop items, allowing stars, agencies, and fans to interact directly and in real time. Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube are the key channels for promoting K-pop items, with agencies and idols utilizing these platforms to announce new product launches, provide promotional content, and communicate with fans. Ezani (2020) highlights Twitter's primary role as a platform for K-pop fandoms to coordinate collective purchases and fan-driven campaigns, thereby cultivating a heightened sense of excitement and anticipation surrounding product releases.

According to Heliyon (2020), K-pop agencies have implemented new social media marketing methods to promote goods sales, including time-limited deals, unique content, and personalized involvement. For example, idols may offer live broadcasts or provide behind-the-scenes footage, providing a sense of closeness and exclusivity that encourages followers to buy merchandise. This direct contact develops a stronger emotional connection between fans and idols, increasing fans' desire to acquire things featuring their favorite idols. Social media also facilitates the quick broadcast of information, allowing fans to remain up to speed on the newest goods launches and promotions, which might affect their purchase decisions.

In Malaysia, social media is very influential in forming fan engagement with K-pop products. Fans use channels like Instagram and Twitter to learn about new product launches and participate in fan-driven activities like giveaways and fundraising events. According to Soo (2020), social media is an important venue for Malaysian K-pop fans to find new items and engage with the global K-pop community, which helps to improve their consumer behavior.

Peer Influence and Community Engagement

The K-pop fandom is very social, and peer influence has an important effect on fans' actions, including purchase decisions. K-pop fans frequently form tight-knit groups, both online and offline, where they participate in collective activities like streaming parties, fan art exchanges, and group goods purchases. Chadborn et al. (2017) define fandom as a social identity in which members of the group feel a feeling of belonging and mutual support. Within these networks, peer influence may have a significant impact on individual decisions, as fans urge one another to support idols by purchasing official items or attending performances.

The sensation of community within the K-pop fanbase is especially strong on social media platforms, where fans constantly engage in conversations, post content, and plan fan gatherings. Ezani (2020) emphasizes that Malaysian K-pop fans are quite active on social media, participating in worldwide fandom events and contributing to fan-led programs. These campaigns sometimes include collective purchase choices, in which fans band together to buy albums and merchandise in bulk to support their celebrities. This peer-driven activity fosters a sense of shared responsibility and solidarity, strengthening social relationships within the fanbase and increasing individual fans' buying intentions.

In addition to direct peer influence, community participation develops a feeling of collective identity among fans, encouraging them to participate in activities that validate their membership in the fan community. Nasuha (2020) observes that the collaborative character of K-pop fandom, particularly on platforms such as Twitter, helps fans to feel linked to a bigger global movement, increasing their emotional commitment in both the fanbase and their idols. This sense of community, along with peer influence, has a significant impact on fans' spending patterns, particularly their desire to purchase items as a means of displaying their commitment and dedication to the fandom.

Emotional Connection and Fan Identity

K-pop fans frequently form strong emotional bonds with their favorite stars, which has a big impact on their fan identification and purchasing habits. Fans see their support for idols as more than simply an act of admiration; it also reflects their unique identity. According to Soo (2020), fans' emotional tie to idols is a major element increasing their interest in goods, since possessing official things lets them feel closer to the idols they respect. This emotional connection

is heightened by the intimacy provided between idols and fans on social media, where idols frequently offer personal updates, behind-the-scenes footage, and messages of appreciation.

Ezani (2020) underlines that for Malaysian K-pop fans, fan identification is inextricably related to the emotional relationship they have with their idols. Fans frequently see their purchases of items as a method to help their celebrities' professions and contribute to their success. This sense of duty and personal connection drives fans to participate in consumption behaviors that are consistent with their fan identity, such as buying albums, attending concerts, and taking part in fan-led campaigns. Furthermore, the digital aspect of K-pop fandom enables fans to construct and express their fan identity via social media, where they may show off their item collections, participate in fan conversations, and share their own fan experiences.

The emotional connection between fans and idols is a key component of K-pop fandom, and it influences fans' purchasing decisions. By purchasing official items, fans may demonstrate their dedication and devotion to their idols while also reinforcing their sense of belonging within the fan community. This emotional commitment is enhanced by the individualized character of idol-fan interaction on social media, in which idols frequently express gratitude for their followers' support, resulting in a reciprocal connection that fosters ongoing consumer involvement.

The Impact of Idol Endorsement

Idol endorsements have an enormous impact on fan spending habits, especially when it comes to merchandise. Fans regard K-pop celebrities as trustworthy characters, and their endorsements of items can have a significant impact on their shopping decisions. According to Heliyon (2020), idol endorsements add legitimacy to businesses because fans see them as extensions of their personalities and ideals. This type of endorsement is particularly successful in

the context of K-pop, where fans have a strong emotional attachment to their idols and are more willing to purchase things linked with them.

According to Chadborn et al (2017), idol endorsements generate a perception of exclusivity and desirability for items, which can raise fan interest and sales. For example, exclusive items directly endorsed by an idol may be seen as a collector item, incentivizing enthusiasts to purchase. In Malaysia, idol endorsements are especially popular among young adult followers, who see these items as a chance to connect with their idols on a more personal level (Ezani, 2020). The faith that fans have in their idols, along with the emotional importance of owning recommended items, makes idol endorsements a potent marketing tool in the K-pop business.

K-pop in Malaysia

K-pop has created a strong presence in Malaysia, where it has amassed a devoted and ardent following. The emergence of K-pop in Malaysia may be ascribed to a number of causes, including the accessibility of K-pop material via digital platforms, Malaysian fans' active participation on social media, and K-pop's international appeal as a cultural phenomenon. According to Ezani (2020), Malaysian K-pop fans are quite active on social media sites like Twitter and Instagram, where they interact with both local and worldwide K-pop communities. These sites enable Malaysian fans to keep up with the newest K-pop trends, participate in fan-led campaigns, and find new merchandise updates.

K-pop's success in Malaysia is further boosted by specific marketing methods tailored to Malaysian fans' preferences. For example, K-pop agencies sometimes work with local businesses to create region-specific goods or arrange fan gatherings in Malaysia. According to Soo (2020), Malaysian fans' connection with K-pop extends beyond online interactions and includes offline

activities such as attending concerts, engaging in fan gatherings, and organizing fan initiatives. This multifaceted interaction has helped to increase K-pop's popularity in Malaysia, where it has become a mainstream cultural impact among young adults.

In addition to the impacts of social media, the international aspect of K-pop fandom has contributed to K-pop's appeal in Malaysia. According to Jin (2016), K-pop's global popularity stems from its capacity to connect with fans from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, transforming it into a true transnational phenomenon. In Malaysia, this world-wide appeal has helped to build a large and dedicated audience, with young adult fans embracing K-pop not just as a form of entertainment but also as a way of life and cultural identity.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate how social media affects the purchase intentions of young adult K-pop enthusiasts in Malaysia. K-pop, with its worldwide appeal, has effectively used social media channels to engage fans and advertise merchandise. Understanding the reasons that motivate fans to buy K-pop items is key as fan connections with idols become an increasingly important element of the fan experience. This study takes a quantitative approach to investigating these issues, focusing on how social media activity, such as idol promotions, endorsements, and fan community involvement, affects fans' purchase intentions.

3.1 Research Design

This study uses a quantitative descriptive research approach to investigate the factors that impact K-pop fans' purchase intentions, particularly those related to social media. A quantitative technique is suited for this study because it allows for the systematic gathering and analysis of numerical data, which will then be utilized to find patterns and connections between variables. Quantitative approaches are commonly employed in consumer behavior research because they allow researchers to collect quantitative data and identify important patterns (Fidel, 2000). The use of structured questionnaires guarantees that the data obtained is similar between respondents, allowing the findings to be applied to a broader group of K-pop fans in Malaysia.

The survey will be a primary collection tool, with structured questions addressing various elements of fandom behavior and the role of social media in influencing buying decisions. The survey is organized into four main areas. The first section, section A, takes demographic

information from respondents such as their age, gender, educational level, and job status. This information is critical for understanding the demographic composition of the fan base and discovering patterns in purchase behavior across demographic groupings.

Section B collects psychographic data by asking respondents about their fandom behaviors, level of engagement with K-pop groups, and history of merchandise purchases. This section seeks to understand the factors that drive fans' interest in K-pop and how these motivations impact their purchase decisions. The following section, section C, focuses on the specific elements that impact purchasing decisions, such as idol endorsements, visual appeal, social influence, and goods aesthetics. This part employs Likert-scale questions to allow respondents to assess the relevance of these elements on a scale, resulting in quantifiable data that can be statistically analyzed to determine the most significant influencers on purchase intentions.

Finally, Section D investigates the influence of social media in shaping fan purchase behavior. The questions regarding this topic will focus on how fans interact with idol-related content on platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, as well as how this content influences their choice to purchase items. This involves analyzing the effect of idols' social media posts, such as unboxing videos, product endorsements, and livestreams. Overall, this strategy guarantees that all relevant variables—demographics, fandom behavior, buying reasons, and social media influence—are thoroughly investigated, allowing for straightforward data analysis and interpretation.

3.2 Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Method

The population for this study is made up of young adult K-pop enthusiasts in Malaysia aged 18 to 30 years. These people are usually active on social media sites and are frequently

affected by online interactions with their favorite K-pop idols. Previous study has shown that young adults are the most active cohort in terms of K-pop fandom and social media usage (Tan, 2022). By concentrating on this demographic, the research hopes to get insight into a subset of the K-pop following that is most likely to participate with both social media and merchandise purchases

The sample size for this investigation is set to 60 people. While a larger sample size may provide more generalizability, 60 respondents are considered acceptable for an exploratory study of this sort, particularly considering Malaysia's unique group of K-pop lovers. This sample size is also consistent with other research that looked at fan behaviors in similar-sized groups (Soo, 2023). The goal is to collect responses that are indicative of the larger community of young adult K-pop fans, allowing us to detect crucial trends and patterns in purchasing intentions.

A non-probability convenience sampling methodology will be utilized. This strategy was chosen since it is practical and effective in reaching the target group. K-pop fans in Malaysia are highly engaged on social media sites such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, where they interact with fan pages and groups dedicated to certain K-pop idols. These platforms provide an easy approach to distribute the survey to a large number of fans who meet the study's demographic requirements. Convenience sampling, while effective, raises the possibility of bias because the sample may not be representative of the overall community of K-pop fans. To mitigate this, the survey will be shared across a variety of fan groups and social media platforms to ensure a broader and more diverse range of respondents (Tan, 2023).

By taking this technique, the study hopes to collect data that is both accurate and representative of the experiences and purchasing habits of young adult K-pop fans in Malaysia.

Despite the possible limits of convenience sampling, the diversity of online fan communities will provide a valuable data set for studying the impact of social media on fan purchasing intentions.

3.3 Data Collection

The data for this study was collected through an online survey that will be distributed via prominent social media platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, and Xiao Hong Shu. This survey targeted Malaysians who have purchased K-pop records and have past purchasing experience. The survey link will be distributed via K-pop fandom-related posts, direct messages, and community groups, assuring broad exposure among the target demographic. Respondents will complete the survey using Google Forms, a user-friendly tool for collecting and organizing data. Participation will be voluntary, and the study will focus on those aged 18 to 30 years old, regardless of religious affiliation. On the first page of the survey, participants will be notified of the confidentiality of the data collected, safeguarding their privacy and underlining that the information submitted will only be used for research purposes.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data collected will be descriptive analysis to discover trends and highlight major results concerning K-pop album purchase intention and the impact of social media on Malaysian k-pop fans. Categorical data, such as the most popular social media platforms or preferred purchasing methods, will be represented using percentages and frequency distributions. This study will allow researchers to define the dataset's fundamental patterns and variability, resulting in a clear picture of fans' behaviors and preferences. Visual tools such as bar charts and pie charts will be utilized to efficiently display the data, making it easier to detect and explain trends. The data also utilize Microsoft Excel as an assist tool to produce chart, bar graph and statistical data.

3.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has included research design, research population, sample size, sampling method, data collection and data analysis. The study used a Google Form survey to collect data from 120 respondents, who gave valuable insights. The results of the analysis will be expanded upon in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

FINDING AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

A total of 60 sets of Google Forms are collected. The research question in Chapter 1 will be brought to answer. In this chapter, the finding of online surveys will be analyzed and discussed with pie charts, bar graphs and statistics.

4.1 Section A: Demographic Background

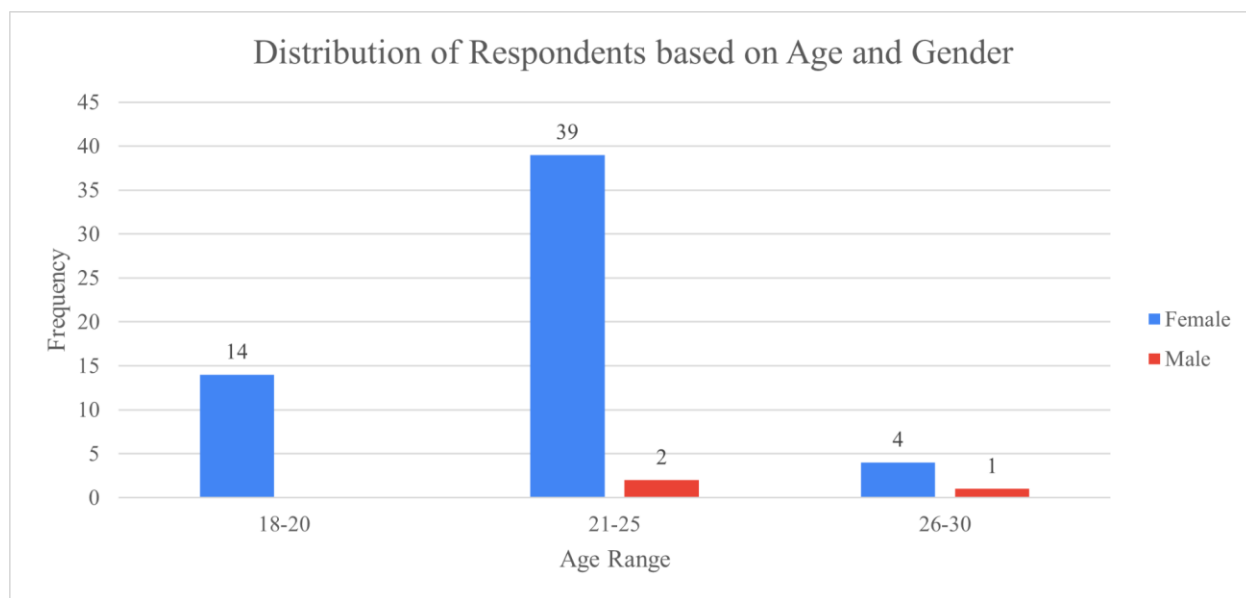


Figure 1: Distribution of respondents based on age and gender

Figure 1 shows the majority of young adults who participate in this survey are aged between 21 to 25 years old which has a total 68.3% (41 respondents). Following by respondents who aged between 18 to 20 years old reached 23.3% (14 respondents) and 8.3% (5 respondents)

from respondents who aged between 26 to 30 years old. Among these data, there are only 5% (3 respondents) of male respondents and the majority of females are aged between 21 to 25 years old which has the highest percentage, 65% (39 respondents) within the survey.

Level of Education (Highest)

60 responses

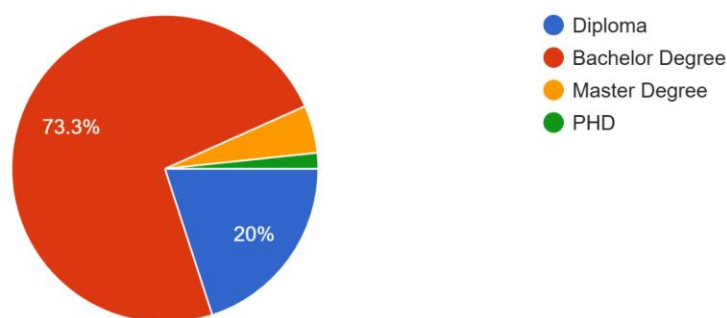


Figure 2: Level of education (Highest)

According to Figure 2, 73.3% (44 respondents) of young adults have their highest education on bachelor's degrees in Malaysia. Among the 60 respondents, 20% (12 respondents) who has diploma education, 5% (3 respondents) are from master's degree and 1% (1 respondents) from PhD (Doctor of Philosophy).

Occupation:
60 responses

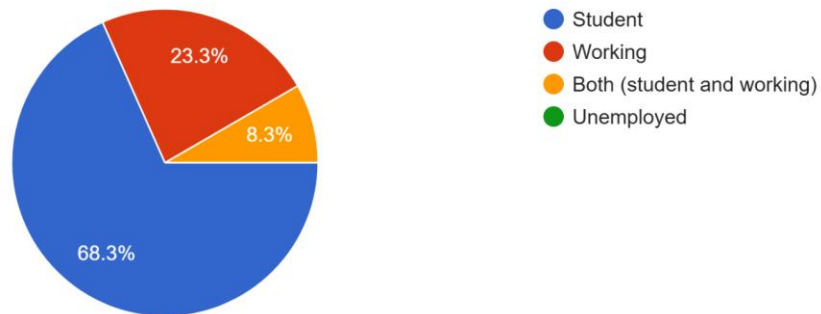


Figure 3: Occupation

In Figure 3, it shows that 68.3% (41 respondents) are still working on education as students and it is the majority of respondents status in this survey. There 23.3% (14 respondents) are in working status and 8.3% (5 respondents) who currently are students and working at the same time. There are no unemployed respondents within the survey.

4.2 Section B: Psychological

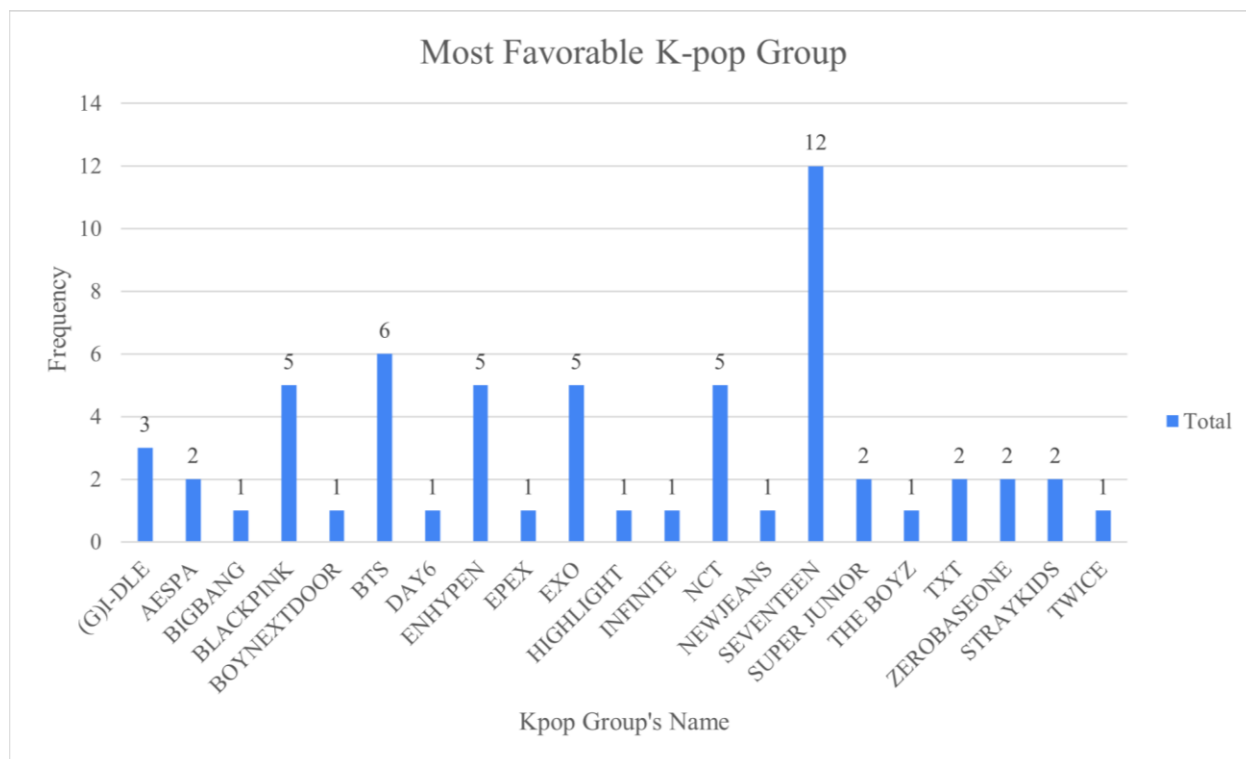


Figure 4: Most favorable k-pop group

Based on Figure 4, Seventeen are the most favorable k-pop group among the survey, having 20% (12 respondents) of fans among numerous k-pop groups. Following BTS which has 10% (6 respondents) higher than BlackPink, Enhypen, EXO and NCT which have the same amount of fans, each 8.3% (5 respondents) choose them as their favorable k-pop group. Meanwhile, Aespa, Super Junior, TXT, ZeroBaseOne and StrayKids each 3.3% (2 respondents) as their fans. Among the data in Figure 4, there are 5% (3 respondents) are fans of (G)i-dle; in contrast, BigBang, BoyNextDoor, Day6, Epex, Highlight, Infinite, Newjeans, The Boyz and Twice has the lowest rate with 1.6% (1 respondents) in the survey.

2. Are you a member of an official fan club?
60 responses

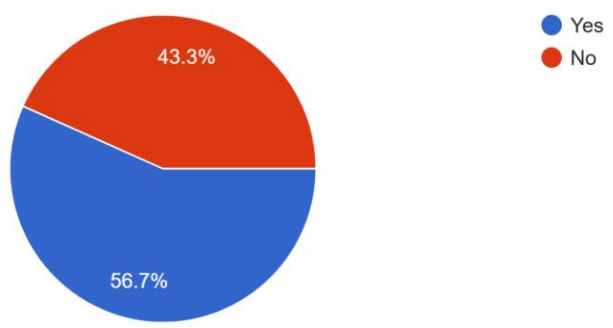


Figure 5: Are you a member of an official fan club?

On Figure 5, on the distribution of respondents by official or unofficial fan club members, there are 34 respondents (56.7%) who are the official fan club of their kpop group as the majority within the survey. The rest of 26 respondents (43.3%) are not an official member of the kpop fan club.

3. How did you become aware of them?
60 responses



Figure 6: How did you become aware of them?

According to Figure 6, there are a total of 47 respondents which occupy 78.3% among the survey who have discovered their idols through social media platforms. In the minority of the survey, 8 respondents (13.3%) have known their idols through word of mouth, 4 respondents (6.7%) recognize k-pop idols from music streaming service and 1 respondents (1.7%) know idols via appearance of merchandise.

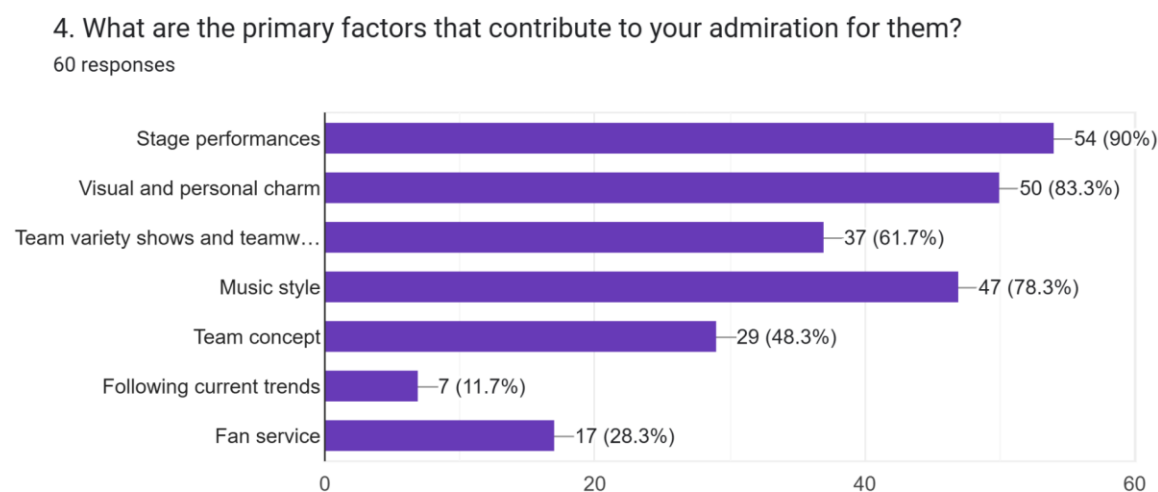


Figure 7: What are the primary factors that contribute to your admiration for them?

Showing on Figure 7, there are 90% (54 respondents) that choose stage performance as their standard to like a k-pop group. Following the option of visual and personal charm, has been chosen by 50 respondents who have occupied 83.3% among the survey. The option of music style is also one of the majority choices that gain 78.3% (47) of respondents agree it is a reason to admire their idols. Going down to the next option, 61.7% (37 respondents) are interested in their idols via

the team variety shows and teamwork. 29 of respondents (48.3%) choose the team concept as the factor that brings them want to discover the k-pop group. The minority option of fan service was chosen by 17 respondents (28.3%) and 11.7% (7 respondents) for choosing following current trends as the chance to have an admiration for idols.

5. What types of merchandise do you typically purchase?

60 responses

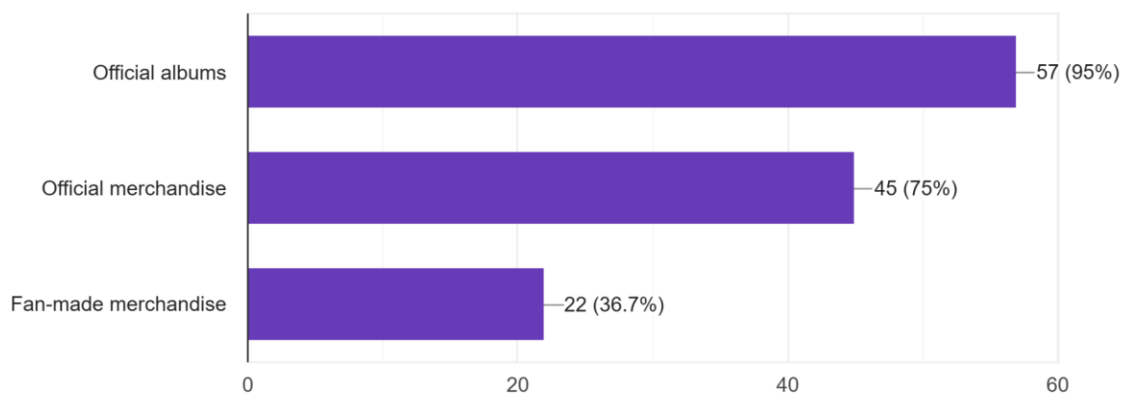


Figure 8: What types of merchandise do you typically purchase?

Among the 60 respondents, 95% (57) of respondents had experience purchasing official albums, a very majority of respondents. Between them, 45% of respondents (75%) had purchased official merchandise before and 36.7% (22) of respondents had purchased fan-made merchandise in their past experience.

6. How frequently would you purchase the merchandise?

60 responses

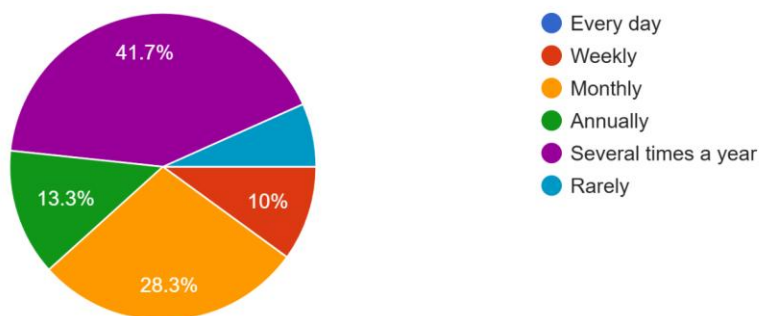


Figure 9: How frequently would you purchase the merchandise?

Figure 9 shows the frequency of respondents purchasing merchandise in their daily life. Majority of the respondents state that they purchase k-pop merchandise several times a year, 25 respondents, 41.7% choose it in the survey. 13.3% (8 respondents) have at least once annually on merchandise. Monthly purchasing behaviour was chosen by 17 respondents, 28.3% among the survey. A minority of respondents rarely buy k-pop merchandise, 6.7% (4 respondents); some of them buy it weekly, 10% (6 respondents).

7. How many items do you typically purchase at one time?

60 responses

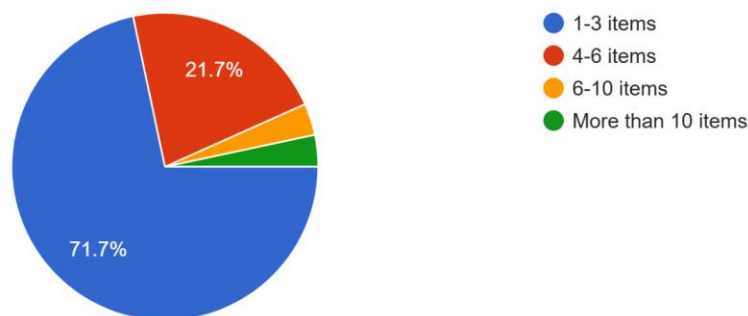


Figure 10: How many items do you typically purchase at one time?

Based on Figure 10, there are 43 (71.7%) out of 60 respondents, having about 1 to 3 items in the amount of merchandise in their every procurement. For another 13 respondents (21.7%) had purchased between 4 to 6 items of kpop merchandise at every one time. The option of 6 to 10 and more than 10 items has the same amount of 3.3% (2 respondents).

8. What factors influenced your decision to make your first purchase?

60 responses

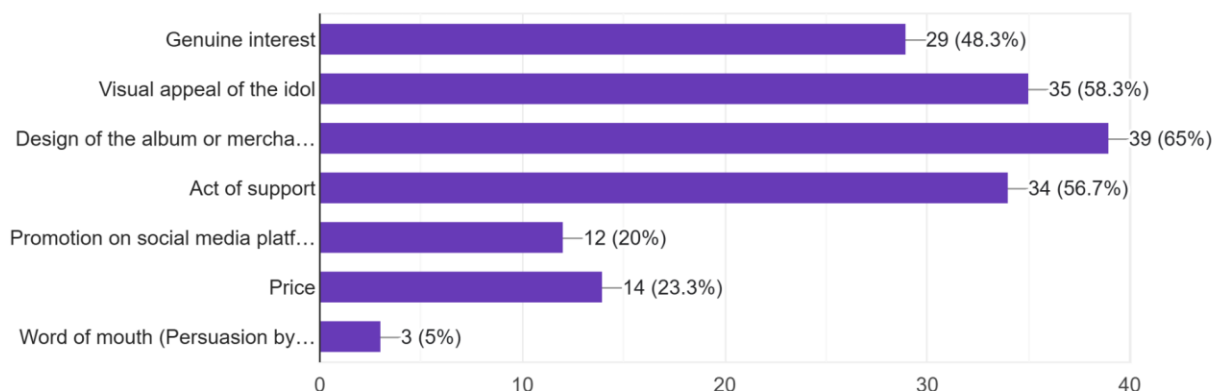


Figure 11: What factors influenced your decision to make your first purchase?

According to Figure 11, 39 respondents (65%) have their first purchase attached to the design of the album and merchandise. Meanwhile, 35 respondents (58.3%) have their first purchase on merchandise because of the visual appeal of k-pop idols. There are 56.7% (34 of respondents) willing to get the first purchase as an act of support for the group. 29 respondents (48.3%) of the respondents vote genuine interest to have the first purchase on the group. The option of price, promotion on social media platforms and word of mouth, respectively have 23.3% (14 respondents), 20% (12 respondents) and 5% (3 respondents) vote them as the purchase intention to have the first purchase.

9. What are the main motivations for your subsequent purchases?

60 responses

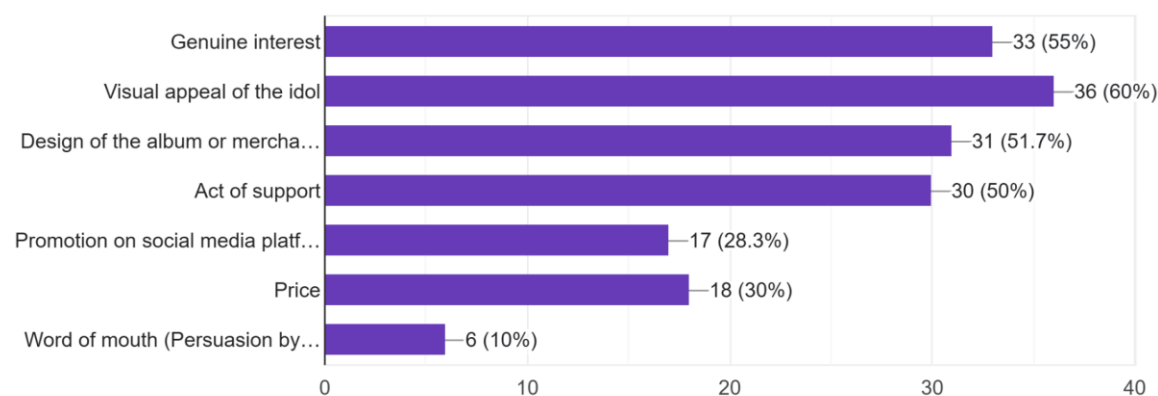


Figure 12: What are the main motivations for your subsequent purchases?

On the subsequent purchase, Figure 12 shows that 36 respondents (60%) choose visual appeal of the idol as their main motivation. Following 55% (33 respondents) have genuine interest in purchasing the merchandise in subsequent purchases. With near rates, 31 of the respondents (51.7%) have their subsequent purchase motivated by the design of the album and merchandise. Similarly, 30 of respondents (50%) purchase as an act of support to their idols. In the option of

Promotion on social media and price have minor differences which one gets 17 (28.3%) of respondents and 18 (30%) of respondents in other ones. Option word of mouth gets the minority of 10% (6 respondents).

4.3 Section C: Factors of purchase intention

I would buy merchandise because the album design is aesthetic.			
Row Labels	▼	Count of Number	Count of Percentage
Least Likely		1	1.67%
Less Likely		4	6.67%
Neutral		3	5.00%
Most Likely		20	33.33%
Very Likely		32	53.33%
Grand Total		60	100.00%

Figure 13: Purchase intention based on aesthetics design

According to Figure 13, 32 of respondents (53.3%) stated that they may purchase merchandise if it matches their aesthetic preference. While 20 of the respondents (33.3%) definitely purchase merchandise based on the aesthetic factor. There are 5% of respondents (3) who would consider purchasing design. 6.7% of respondents (4) are less likely to purchase and 1 respondent (1.7%) would not consider purchasing based on aesthetic factors. Majority of respondents have higher purchasing intentions towards aesthetics design.

I would buy merchandise because the visuals of members look nice on it.			
Row Labels	▼	Count of Quantity	Count of Percentage
Least Likely		2	3.33%
Less Likely		1	1.67%
Neutral		2	3.33%
Most Likely		31	51.67%
Very Likely		24	40.00%
Grand Total		60	100.00%

Figure 14: Purchase intention based on appearance of k-pop idols

In Figure 14, the majority of respondents would most likely and very likely to purchase merchandise based on the appearance of k-pop idols which have 51.7% (31 respondents) and 40%

(24 respondents) respectively. 3.3% (2 respondents) are neutral on purchase intention based on appearance of k-pop idols. In common rate with respondents who are least likely to this purchase intention statement. The response to less likely has a minority which 1.7% (1) respondent among the survey respondents. Majority of respondents have higher purchasing intentions towards the appearance of k-pop idols.

I would buy merchandise because I like the concept of this comeback.			
Row Labels	Count of Quantity	Count of Percentage	
Least Likely	2	3.33%	
Less Likely	1	1.67%	
Neutral	7	11.67%	
Most Likely	23	38.33%	
Very Likely	27	45.00%	
Grand Total	60	100.00%	

Figure 15: Purchase intention based on concept of comeback

The rate of opinion towards purchase intention based on the concept of comeback has about 23% of respondents (38.33%). The number of respondents who vote on a very likely purchase intention based on the concept of comeback has the majority of respondents, 27 respondents (45%). 7 of respondents (11.7%) are neutral about the purchase intention opinion. Coming down with option least likely, gain a total of 3.3% (2 respondents), and option less likely, gain 3.3% (1 respondent). Majority of respondents have higher purchasing intentions towards the concept of comeback.

I would buy merchandise because I like the music of this comeback			
Row Labels	▼	Count of Quantity	Count of Percentage
Least Likely		1	1.67%
Less Likely		2	3.33%
Neutral		5	8.33%
Most Likely		32	53.33%
Very Likely		20	33.33%
Grand Total		60	100.00%

Figure 16: Purchase intention based on music choice

Based on Figure 16, the majority of respondents have purchase intention based on the music choice in which 32 (53.3%) of the respondents choose most likely, 20 (33.3%) of the respondents choose very likely. There are 8.3% (5 respondents) who maintain a neutral attitude towards the purchase intention opinion. The option of less likely and least likely has respectively 3.3% (2 respondents) and 1.7% which 1 of respondents. Majority of respondents have higher purchasing intentions towards music choice.

I would buy merchandise because my idol had promoted it on social media			
Row Labels	▼	Count of Quantity	Count of Percentage
Least Likely		4	6.67%
Less Likely		12	20.00%
Neutral		8	13.33%
Most Likely		16	26.67%
Very Likely		20	33.33%
Grand Total		60	100.00%

Figure 17: Purchase intention based on k-pop idols' promotion on social media

20 (33.3%) of the respondents are very likely to purchase merchandise based on k-pop idols' promotion on social media. In near collection, 16 of the respondents (26.7%) would like to

purchase merchandise if their idols do promotion on social media. Following the option of less likely, there are 20% (12) of respondents with less purchase intention on idols promoting merchandise on social media. Going down with the next option which respondents are neutral on the purchase intention statement and has about 8 of respondents (13.3%). The last and least respondents on this statement have 4 of respondents (6.7%) choose least interest to purchase on promoted merchandise. Majority of respondents have higher purchasing intentions towards k-pop idols' promotion on social media.

I would buy merchandise because			
I would get a chance to evolve in online / physical fan meetings			
Row Labels		Count of Quantity	Count of Percentage
Least Likely		10	16.67%
Less Likely		8	13.33%
Neutral		7	11.67%
Most Likely		22	36.67%
Very Likely		13	21.67%
Grand Total		60	100.00%

Figure 18: Purchase intention based on interactive and emotional support

According to Figure 18, it shows that 22 of respondents (36.7%) are most likely to purchase merchandise to get a chance to interact with their idols. Among this data, 13 of the respondents (21.7%) are very likely to purchase merchandise based on the statement. However, 10 of the respondents (16.7%) are least interested in purchasing to get to interact with idols. 13.3% (8) of the respondents react less likely to the statement and 11.7% (7 respondents) react neutral to the purchase intention factor. Majority of respondents have higher purchasing intentions towards interactive and emotional support.

I would buy merchandise because my idols said they like this comeback on social media		
Row Labels	Count of Quantity	Count of Percentage
Least Likely	5	8.33%
Less Likely	9	15.00%
Neutral	14	23.33%
Most Likely	13	21.67%
Very Likely	19	31.67%
Grand Total	60	100.00%

Figure 19: Purchase intention based on k-pop idols word of mouth

Among 60 respondents, 19 of respondents (31.7%) are interested in purchasing merchandise based on their idols word of mouth. Following the rate, 14 of the respondents (23.3%) are neutral on the factor and 13 of the respondents (21.7%) are most likely to purchase merchandise following word of mouth of idols. 15% of the respondents (9 respondents) react less likely and 8.3% of the respondents (5 respondents) react to least likely on the purchase intention factor. Majority of respondents have higher purchasing intentions towards k-pop idols word of mouth.

I would buy merchandise because the purchase channel gives extra merchandise		
Row Labels	Count of Quantity	Count of Percentage
Least Likely	3	5.00%
Less Likely	7	11.67%
Neutral	8	13.33%
Most Likely	22	36.67%
Very Likely	20	33.33%
Grand Total	60	100.00%

Figure 20: Purchase intention based on extra benefit

Through this survey, 22 respondents (36.7%) get purchase intentions when the purchase channel gives extra merchandise. 20 respondents (33.3%) are very likely having extra merchandise. 13.3% of respondents (8 respondents) stand neutral to purchase merchandise in order to get extra merchandise. In contrast, 7 respondents (11.7%) are less likely, and 3 respondents (5%) are least likely to have extra merchandise. Majority of respondents have higher purchasing intentions towards extra benefits.

I would buy merchandise because I want to support them even though I don't really admire the appearance of it		
Row Labels	Count of Quantity	Count of Percentage
Least Likely	9	15.00%
Less Likely	8	13.33%
Neutral	2	3.33%
Most Likely	19	31.67%
Very Likely	22	36.67%
Grand Total	60	100.00%

Figure 21: Purchase intention based on act of support

Based on Figure 21, 36.7% of respondents (22 respondents) have voted very likely on purchase intention to have merchandise as an act of support to their idols. With similar data, 31.7% (19 respondents) would strongly support their idols' merchandise. There are respondents who are least likely to support it if they are not satisfied with the merchandise which gain 9 of respondents (15%). After that, 8 of respondents (13.3%) are less likely to purchase merchandise as an act of support and 2 of respondents (3.3%) stand neutral on this opinion. Majority of respondents have higher purchasing intentions as an act of support.

I would buy merchandise because the feedback is good from the fan community, social media or friends		
Row Labels	Count of Quantity	Count of Percentage
Least Likely	4	6.67%
Less Likely	4	6.67%
Neutral	10	16.67%
Most Likely	12	20.00%
Very Likely	30	50.00%
Grand Total	60	100.00%

Figure 22: Purchase intention based on positive feedback

In Figure 22, 30 of respondents (50%), half of respondents are very likely to purchase merchandise based on the positive feedback. Option of most likely has been chosen by 20% (12 respondents); similarly, option of neutral has been chosen by 16.7% of respondents (10 respondents). There are an equal number of respondents, 6.7% (4 respondents), select least likely and less likely on purchase intention based on feedback. Majority of respondents have higher purchasing intentions towards positive feedback.

I would buy merchandise because I don't want to be left out if everyone around had brought it		
Row Labels	Count of Quantity	Count of Percentage
Least Likely	18	30.00%
Less Likely	12	20.00%
Neutral	9	15.00%
Most Likely	10	16.67%
Very Likely	11	18.33%
Grand Total	60	100.00%

Figure 23: Purchase intention based on fear of missing out (FOMO)

In the purchase intention based on fear of missing out, 30% of respondents (18 respondents) are not interested in purchasing merchandise. 12 respondents (20%) present less likely to be affected by fear of missing out. The option of very likely, most likely and neutral, has gained the respondents from more to less which present 18.3% (11 respondents), 16.7% (10 respondents) and 15% (9 respondents). Majority of respondents have lower purchasing intentions towards the feeling of fear of missing out.

I would buy merchandise because it is cheap

Row Labels	Count of Quantity	Count of Percentage
Least Likely	6	10.00%
Less Likely	10	16.67%
Neutral	4	6.67%
Most Likely	24	40.00%
Very Likely	16	26.67%
Grand Total	60	100.00%

Figure 24: Purchase intention based on price

40% of respondents (24 respondents) are most likely to purchase merchandise if the price is cheap, it stands the majority of respondents in the statement. Move down with option very likely, it gains about 26.7% of respondents (16 respondents). The option of less likely is chosen by 16.7% of respondents (10 respondents). The rest of the 10 respondents have separately chosen at least likely (10%, 6 respondents) and neutral (6.7%, 4 respondents). Majority of respondents have higher purchasing intentions towards a cheaper price.

4.4 Section D: The influence of idols in social media and community

I would buy the same object that my idol has on social media posts, live or community			
Row Labels	▼	Count of Quantity	Count of Percentage
Least Likely		8	13.33%
Less Likely		8	13.33%
Neutral		14	23.33%
Most Likely		10	16.67%
Very Likely		20	33.33%
Grand Total		60	100.00%

Figure 25: I would buy the same object that my idol has on social media posts, live or community

Moving to the last section, Figure 25 shows that both least likely and less likely have reached 13.3% of respondents (8 respondents) to purchase the same items that idols possess on social media or community. There are 10 respondents (16.7%) present who are most likely to have the same item. 23.3% of respondents (14 respondents) show that they are neutral about this statement. The option of very likely has the majority of votes which reached 33.3%, 20 respondents influenced by their idols through social media to have the same item. Majority of respondents are higher influenced by idols' social media post and community.

I would buy the items of my idol as the ambassador		
Row Labels	Count of Quantity	Count of Percentage
Least Likely	8	13.33%
Less Likely	6	10.00%
Neutral	11	18.33%
Most Likely	14	23.33%
Very Likely	21	35.00%
Grand Total	60	100.00%

Figure 26: I would buy the items of my idol as the ambassador

Less likely respondents who have about 6 respondents that 10% in total of the percentage to purchase endorsement. 13.3% of the respondents (6 respondents), are less likely to have an endorsement that their idol endorsed. With a difference of 2 respondents compared to least likely, the option of neutral has about 18.3% of respondents (11 respondents). 14 respondents (23.3%) were most likely and 21 respondents (35%) were very likely to purchase the items that their idols endorse. Majority of respondents are highly influenced by idol as ambassadors.

**I would buy the merchandise
after seeing my idol unboxing videos on live**

Row Labels	Count of Quantity	Count of Percentage
Least Likely	7	11.67%
Less Likely	10	16.67%
Neutral	12	20.00%
Most Likely	12	20.00%
Very Likely	19	31.67%
Grand Total	60	100.00%

Figure 27: I would buy the merchandise after seeing my idol unboxing videos on live

This statement examines whether the respondents would purchase after watching the details over the merchandise through social media. As Figure 27 presents, it shows that 19 respondents (31.7%) would very likely purchase after seeing unboxing video. There are 12 respondents (20%) are uncertain about the situation; in contrast, another 12 respondents (20%) would purchase merchandise to express their satisfaction with the details. However, 16.7% (10 respondents) and 11.7% (7 respondents) showed that they are less and least likely to purchase even watched the details.

I would buy an item if it was popular or trending among fans on social media or community		
Row Labels	Count of Quantity	Count of Percentage
Least Likely	6	10.00%
Less Likely	15	25.00%
Neutral	7	11.67%
Most Likely	9	15.00%
Very Likely	23	38.33%
Grand Total	60	100.00%

Figure 28: I would buy an item if it was popular or trending among fans on social media or community

This statement examines whether respondents would be influenced by word of mouth. As Figure 18 presents, 10% (6 respondents) and 25% (15 respondents) are least likely and less likely to be affected by peers. 7 respondents (11.7%) stand neutral who have not come across or noticed this situation in their experience. In contrast, 38.3% (23 respondents) and 15% (9 respondents) are very likely and most likely to be influenced by peers on social media and community.

I would buy merchandise if it was frequently showcased on social media platforms, affecting my desire to own similar items		
Row Labels	Count of Quantity	Count of Percentage
Least Likely	5	8.33%
Less Likely	11	18.33%
Neutral	13	21.67%
Most Likely	11	18.33%
Very Likely	20	33.33%
Grand Total	60	100.00%

Figure 29: I would buy merchandise if it was frequently showcased on social media platforms, affecting my desire to own similar items

This statement examines whether respondents would be influenced by visual stimulus effect, it implicit views as brainwashed on persuasion to make purchasement. There are 18.3% (11 respondents) and 33.3% (20 respondents) are most likely and very likely to boost interest in discovering the items on social media. 13 respondents (21.7%) are uncertain about the situation. 18.3% (11 respondents) and 8.3% (5 respondents) are less likely and least likely to be influenced by frequent exposure of items on social media.

I would buy the items to follow the trends on social media		
Row Labels	Count of Quantity	Count of Percentage
Least Likely	8	13.33%
Less Likely	18	30.00%
Neutral	8	13.33%
Most Likely	15	25.00%
Very Likely	11	18.33%
Grand Total	60	100.00%

Figure 30: I would buy the items to follow the trends on social media

Following Figure 30, shows that 13.3% (8 respondents) who choose neutral are uncertain or never noticed this situation before. With the same rates, 13.3% (8 respondents) are least likely to follow the trends. 18 out of 60 respondents who are less likely to be affected by the trends which stand 30 percent in this statement. However, there are 11 respondents (18.3%) and 15 respondents (25%) who are very likely and most likely to purchase items by trends on social media.

I would buy the products that my idols used or endorse to get a closer connection to them			
Row Labels	▼	Count of Quantity	Count of Percentage
Least Likely		10	16.67%
Less Likely		8	13.33%
Neutral		11	18.33%
Most Likely		10	16.67%
Very Likely		21	35.00%
Grand Total		60	100.00%

Figure 31: I would buy the products that my idols used or endorse to get a closer connection to them

In order to have an emotional connection with idols, 35% (21 respondents) and 16.7% (10 respondents) are very likely and most likely to purchase the same items that idols have. 11 respondents (18.3%) stand neutral which is uncertain to the statement. In contrast, 13.3% (8) of the respondents and 16.7% (10) of the respondents are less likely and least likely to attach an emotional connection with idols through social media.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the study's important results about the elements that impact K-pop fans' purchase intentions in Malaysia. The findings demonstrate how aesthetics, online communities, emotional connections, and social media influence fan purchasing patterns. Each aspect will be described, linking the findings to previous study and offering ideas for future K-pop research and marketing tactics.

5.1 Discussion

5.1.1 Aesthetic influence the purchasing intention of K-Pop fans

Based on the result of the study, the majority of the respondents are willing to purchase merchandise based on the design of the album, visuals of idols and the concept of the comeback. In which shows that purchase intention could be influenced by visualization. According to Le Hoang (2020), a visually appealing audience can develop emotional connections with a product, leading to purchasing intentions. Beautiful natural surroundings can evoke feelings of comfort and happiness, leading to a sensation of desire. Having beautiful and distinctive things may boost confidence and reduce stress. Product design may raise consumer awareness and self-esteem, leading to increased purchase intentions (Liang, 2024). About 83.3% of respondents claim that visual and personal charm caught their attention and make their first purchase by the design of the album and appearance of the k-pop idols.

The visual presentation and its constant creation are essential strategies for influencers to transmit valuable information and engage audiences' attention (Winch, 2015; Xie et al, 2023). Companies often use physically beautiful influencers in promotional campaigns due to their ability to shape client perceptions towards certain products (Wang & Scheinbaum,2018; AlFarraj, 2021). Thus, the fancier look from kpop idols and variety of stage performances including merchandise, the purchase intention of fans increases. Additionally, most idols would change appearance like hairstyle, hair colour, costume and stage makeup in every comeback. Visual merchandising could stimulate consumers' curiosity and lead to further in-store exploration (Cant & Hefer, 2012; Park et al, 2015). The visual changes attract fans and raise the purchase intention to have the merchandise with the temporarily new appearance of idols, as the look is exclusive.

Premium companies may satisfy consumers' desire for exclusivity by setting them apart from others (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012; Cho et al, 2021). In this survey, respondents have shown that they are highly involved in the concept and music of every K-pop group. Which indicates that young adults are attached to the uniqueness of the content. Fresh and new concepts and music increase their purchasing experiences. According to Chen (2023), Popular K-pop groups have developed distinct identities that appeal to global audiences, considering market trends and cultural distinctions. For example, k-pop groups like BLACKPINK's identity combines femininity and strength, making them a popular choice for female crushes. BTS has established a unique identity via captivating narrative and social concern. They regularly explore topics of adolescence, mental health, and self-love to connect with their audience on a deeper level (Chen, 2023). Young adult consumers' quest for individuality or conformity would be important motivators behind their luxury buying behavior (Cho et al, 2021). The uniqueness makes respondents increase on purchase intention to have special experiences on interesting concepts.

5.1.2 Online community and services channel influence the purchasing intention of K-Pop fans

As up to 70% of respondents increase their purchase intention as perceived positive feedback on merchandise and gain popularity from online communities, the bandwagon effect can foster a sense of belonging among others who also buy premium products (Cho et al, 2021). According to Sulthana and Vasantha (2019), customer acceptance of eWOM (Electronic word-of-mouth) communication channels might be influenced by the quality of the information they seek. Which indicates that k-pop fans would change their desire for merchandise depending on the information around. K-pop fans on online communities create a sense of homogeneous security. Social psychological closeness allows individuals to regard others as belonging to the same group as them (Charness and Gneezy, 2008; Zhao et al, 2020). However, purchase intention of respondents is affected by word of mouth but not on fear of missing out (FOMO).

Bonus product: Sellers provide gifts in the form of bonus products or additional merchandise, which can be delivered directly or via a lottery system (Bryan and Alvin, 2023). The finding shows 71% of 60 respondents have higher purchasing intentions while the purchase channel gives extra merchandise on respondents' purchasement. Impulsive buying is a form of impulsive or unexpected purchase that occurs owing to excitement and enthusiasm at the moment (Bryan and Alvin, 2023). The act of bonus products brings a pleasant experience to young adults and it stimulates their purchase intention on merchandise.

5.1.3 Emotional connection and interaction influence the purchasing intention of K-Pop fans

Highlight medley indicates a video compilation that extracts highlights of pre-release album tracklists before official comeback as part of promotion in k-pop. Majority of the respondents reflect that their purchase intention increases when music matches their taste. A significant component of KPop's success is due to relatable and passionately delivered song lyrics, complemented by outstanding melodies and music styles that are extremely enticing to listeners (Ryu, 2020). Listening to music can improve mental health by increasing the quantity of dopamine in the brain, which helps to overcome stress (Váradi, 2022). According to Cho (2024), international students requested playlist ideas according to their mood and environment. Feeling a connection with a song or artist leads to free word-of-mouth (WOM) advertising, which has shown to be an effective marketing strategy (Ogden et al, 2011; Bland, 2019). Once music demand has been satisfied, raises on purchase intention.

In South Korea's entertainment company, organizations strive to create a positive connection between fans and k-pop idols, fostering long-term support and recognition (Machado Pereira, 2022). A large number of respondents state that their purchase intention had been influenced by emotional and act of support. There is an observation that most of the respondents within the research have strong emotional appeal on kpop idols as they are willing to purchase merchandise in exchange for fan meetings and acts of support. According to Bland (2019), someone who commits to a one-sided connection with K-pop idols and forms a deep bond to them. Parasocial interaction (PSI) refers to viewers perceived social interactions with portrayed characters in the media (Horton and Wohl, 1956; McLaren, 2021). The raises on emotional appeal, the higher possibility to have an act of support.

The second stage of celebrity worship is when powerful personal sentiments for the celebrity arise, creating the urge to replicate the idol in their habits, aesthetics, and even speech patterns (Bland, 2019). As a result, K-pop fans would have the sense of belonging to purchase the same items perceived or endorsed by idols.

Compared to the first and subsequent purchases from the analysis, the increase in parasocial interaction, the lower the act of support. An act of support only occurs when respondents are not satisfied with the appearance of merchandise.

5.1.4 Social media influence the purchasing intention of K-Pop fans

By the end of the 20th century, users began creating their own material on forums, media sites, and social networks, allowing them to share it with friends, other users, and the entire globe, while companies created content for them (Ceyhan,2019).Based on the analysis of the survey, 78.3% of the respondents who have discovered their idols through social media platforms which explain social media has significantly affected their purchase intention. According to Dholakia and Stemthal (1977), the source credibility model, the perceived beauty, trustworthiness, and skill of an endorser influence the efficacy of their endorsements (Weismueller, 2020). Platforms like Instagram or Twitter are used to share their daily life; sometimes, it is a marketing tool for them. Erdoğan (2015) emphasizes the importance of hedonic and social marketing that engage people and stimulate their thoughts and feelings (Ceyhan, 2019). Idols utilize social media to interact with k-pop fans to enhance parasocial interaction and affect respondents' purchases on ambassador items. Additionally, that is also a reason numerous brands invite k-pop idols as ambassadors; in order to stimulate purchase intention from the large number of fandoms.

According to Tong (2022), live streaming is a popular kind of internet-based multimedia entertainment, particularly on interactive platforms and products. In Korea, k-pop idols use platforms such as Weverse, Instagram and Phoning to implement their live stream. K-pop idols on V Live may decrease their performance images and converse easily with fans by showing their off-stage appearance in comfortable surroundings (Kim, 2021). Through live k-pop fans could react and feedback mutually to interact with idols in real time. Perceived from the analysis of the survey, more than half of respondents would purchase merchandise after watching a live stream. Pleasure feelings received by customers in livestreaming are defined as the amount to which a person feels pleasant, happy, joyous, and satisfied when live streaming, and how this influences their product purchase behavior (Meng, 2021).

5.1.5 Price influence the purchasing intention of K-Pop fans

Price is one of the factors that is significant to 66.7% of respondents. They have stronger purchasing intentions when the price of merchandise is affordable. According to Levrini and Jeffman (2021), given that price indicates "a sacrifice," this variable has the opposite position as purchase intention, with higher prices often resulting in reduced purchasing possibilities. Social exchange theory, founded on economics, argued that one's conduct is results-driven by assessing and evaluating tangible and intangible costs and rewards arising from a specific activity (Kim, 2020). If the benefits from an interaction outweigh the costs, the interaction is more likely to continue; in contrast, the contact is unlikely to occur when the costs of engagement outweigh the benefits (Kim, 2020). As the majority of respondents are students, they may not have the ability to afford merchandise at a higher price or they think the merchandise is not worth the price.

5.2 Limitations

This study acknowledges a number of limitations that may have an influence on the findings' generalizability and breadth. Firstly, the sample size of 60 respondents may not be sufficient to provide a full grasp of the different behaviors and preferences of Malaysian K-pop fans.

Second, the gender distribution among respondents is extremely uneven, with only 7 males out of 60 respondents included in the study. This limits the capacity to effectively investigate gender variations in beliefs and actions.

Furthermore, the majority of the respondents in this survey are students, which may bias the results toward opinions that do not completely represent working people. Obtaining employees' perspectives can be useful for conducting an additional investigation into the disparities between students and employees in terms of K-pop merchandise purchasing intentions.

5.3 Recommendations

In order to improve the limitations in future study, the following recommendations could be considered. First, future study should raise the sample size to provide a complete and more diverse dataset, allowing for a more thorough examination of K-pop fans' habits and preferences.

Second, efforts should be taken to obtain a more equal gender distribution among respondents so that variations in beliefs and behaviors may be adequately investigated. Researchers could do research on the k-pop fanboy community and distribute it extensively.

Third, including a more varied demography, particularly working individuals, is critical for capturing a broader range of opinions. Gaining insights into employers' perspectives might assist detect possible differences in purchasing intentions compared to students, expanding our understanding of K-pop goods purchasing behavior. These measurements would help to a more thorough and inclusive investigation of the elements that influence fan purchase decisions.

5.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study explores the complex aspects influencing the purchase intentions of K-pop fans in Malaysia. The results support existing studies on the effect of visual appeal by shedding light on how visually striking album designs, the attractiveness of novel concepts, and the captivating looks of idols greatly affect fans' decisions regarding purchases. Social media sites and online forums increase customer demand by promoting common experiences, sharing insightful opinions, and providing special offers. At the same time, fans' emotional bonds with their idols build loyalty, which results in more support through the purchase of merchandise. Price stands up as a crucial factor, especially for those who are students, whose limited resources make them more predisposed to perceived value and affordability. However, the study acknowledges certain limitations, such as the underrepresentation of working professionals, the relatively small sample size, and an apparent gender gap among respondents. These limitations highlight how crucial it is to conduct more representative and inclusive research. The data gathered here provides marketers and entertainment organizations practical ways to increase interaction with k-pop fans.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A (Questionnaire)

Section A: Demographic Background

1. Gender
 - Female
 - Male
2. Age
 - 18-20
 - 21-25
 - 26-30
3. Level of education
 - Diploma
 - Bachelor Degree
 - Master Degree
 - PHD
4. Occupation
 - Student
 - Working
 - Both (student and working)
 - Unemployed

Section B: Psychographic

1. Which K-pop fandom do you belong to? (Please specify the group you are most passionate about.)
2. Are you a member of an official fan club?
 - Yes
 - No
3. How did you become aware of them?
 - Through social media platforms (e.g., YouTube, TikTok, Instagram)
 - Through word of mouth (from peers or community)
 - Through music streaming services (e.g., Spotify, Apple Music)
 - Through the appearance of merchandise
4. What are the primary factors that contribute to your admiration for them?
 - Stage performances
 - Visual and personal charm
 - Team variety shows and teamwork
 - Music style
 - Team concept
 - Following current trends
 - Fan service
5. What types of merchandise do you typically purchase?
 - Official albums
 - Official merchandise
 - Fan-made merchandise
 - Others
6. How frequently would you purchase the merchandise?
 - Every day
 - Weekly
 - Monthly
 - Annually
 - Several times a year
 - Rarely
7. How many items do you typically purchase at one time?
 - 1-3 items
 - 4-6 items
 - 6-10 items
 - More than 10 items
8. What factors influenced your decision to make your *first* purchase?
 - Genuine interest

- Visual appeal of the idol
 - Design of the album or merchandise
 - Act of support
 - Promotion on social media platforms
 - Price
 - Word of mouth (Persuasion by peers or community)
9. What are the main motivations for your *subsequent* purchases?
- Genuine interest
 - Visual appeal of the idol
 - Design of the album or merchandise
 - Act of support
 - Promotion on social media platforms
 - Price
 - Word of mouth (Persuasion by peers or community)

Section C: Factors of purchase intention

Please rate each statement based on how likely it would motivate you to purchase (1=Least likely, 5=Most likely)

Please select the option that best reflects your experiences.

(1=Least likely, 2=Less likely, 3=Neutral, 4=Very Likely, Most Likely)

NO		1	2	3	4	5
1	I would buy merchandise because the album design is aesthetic.					
2	I would buy merchandise because the visuals of members look nice on it.					
3	I would buy merchandise because I like the concept of this comeback.					
4	I would buy merchandise because I like the music of this comeback.					
5	I would buy merchandise because my idol had promoted it on social media.					
6	I would buy merchandise because I would get a chance to evolve in online / physical fan meetings.					
7	I would buy merchandise because my idols said they like this comeback on social media.					
8	I would buy merchandise because the purchase channel gives extra merchandise.					
9	I would buy merchandise because I want to support them even though I don't really admire the appearance of it.					
10	I would buy merchandise because the feedback is good from the fan community, social media or friends.					
11	I would buy merchandise because I don't want to be left out if everyone around had brought it.					
12	I would buy merchandise because it is cheap					

Section D: The influence of idols in social media and community

Please rate each statement based on how likely it would motivate you to purchase (1=Least likely, 5=Most likely)

Please select the option that best reflects your experiences.

(1=Least likely, 2=Less likely, 3=Neutral, 4=Very Likely, Most Likely)

NO		1	2	3	4	5
1	I would buy the same object that my idol has on social media posts, live or community.					
2	I would buy the items of my idol as the ambassador.					
3	I would buy the merchandise after seeing my idol unboxing videos on live.					
4	I would buy an item if it was popular or trending among fans on social media or community.					
5	I would buy merchandise if it was frequently showcased on social media platforms, affecting my desire to own similar items.					
6	I would buy the items to follow the trends on social media.					
7	I would buy the products that my idols used or endorse to get a closer connection to them.					