

THE K-POP FAN CULTURE : CONSUMER, PARASOSIAL INTERACTION AND ADOLESCENTS IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to explore the influence of K-Pop culture and parasocial interactions on adolescent consumer behavior in Indonesia, with a particular focus on the role of social media. This research offers a new perspective on how popular culture such as K-Pop can influence adolescent consumer behavior, especially in the context of parasocial interaction through social media. The research method used is descriptive qualitative, data obtained from relevant literature and research. The results showed that K-Pop culture has a significant impact on adolescent consumer behavior, especially through parasocial interactions on social media. However, this study has limitations because the number of research publications used in this article is limited, and also because developments through social media will continue to change along with technological developments, times, and human mindsets. So, the author suggests the need for further research. In conclusion, this study shows that K-Pop culture and parasocial interactions through social media have a significant influence on adolescent consumer behavior in Indonesia. This knowledge can be used by the K-Pop industry and marketers to design more effective marketing strategies for the teenage market in Indonesia in the context of Society 5.0.

Keywords: K-Pop Culture, Parasocial Interaction, Teenage Consumer Behavior, Social Media, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

The Korean Wave, also known as Hallyu, represents a sweeping cultural movement that has gained widespread popularity, extending beyond South Korea's borders and infiltrating global cultures. Its impact on Indonesia's youth is evident through their embrace of various aspects, from Korean cuisine and television dramas to the vibrant world of K-Pop music and fashion. These cultural elements combine to create a unique, polite yet fashionable impression, leading to significant cultural acculturation (K. Wullandari et al., 2023). K-Pop, in particular, has been at the forefront of this movement, drawing in a substantial fan base in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia. It is characterized by its blend of various musical genres, each enriched with Korean lyrics, establishing its unique identity (K. Wullandari et al., 2023).

The industry's success is mirrored in the substantial fan demographic in Indonesia, where a survey by IDN Times (Almaida et al., 2021) revealed that fans predominantly fall between the ages of 15 and 25. Despite intense competition, K-Pop has carved out a significant global niche, with groups like BTS achieving widespread fame and contributing substantially to annual revenues (Keith, 2021). Research

attributes this success to strategic management by Korean entertainment companies, the charm of the group members, and the crucial role of social media platforms in facilitating fan engagement (Kim J. H. et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2021; Kim S. et al., 2021).

The proliferation of the internet has been a catalyst for K-Pop's popularity, with internet usage in Indonesia reaching a penetration rate of 73.7%, signifying a society deeply engaged in digital communication (APJII, 2022). In the era of Society 5.0, which focuses on human-centered technology (Ina, 2019), social media serves as a pivotal platform supporting digital community activities. Late adolescence, an age group ranging from 18 to 21, is a period marked by significant identity formation and a quest for new experiences. Technology has empowered adolescents to explore global phenomena like K-Pop, often influenced by peers and community (K. Wullandari et al., 2023).

This peer influence can encourage teenagers to engage in or form communities with shared interests in K-Pop. Parasocial interaction, a one-sided relationship between television viewers and media personalities as described by Horton and Wohl (1956), is particularly prevalent among teenagers. They often feel a personal connection to their favorite K-Pop idols, engaging actively on special forums followed by fans (K. Wullandari et al., 2023). The K-Pop phenomenon has led to various behaviors among adolescents without independent financial means, including dishonesty and impulsive spending to fulfill their desires related to their idol obsession. This fan behavior has significant economic implications, as demonstrated by collaborations like BTS meals at McDonald's, which increased sales by 41% in the second quarter of 2021 (K. Wullandari et al., 2023). The influence of peers plays a strong role in shaping teenagers' interests in certain phenomena like K-Pop, encouraging them to form communities or fandoms with similar interests (K. Wullandari et al., 2023).

Culture

Culture, as defined by Schiffman (2008), constitutes a compilation of beliefs, values, and customs designed to guide individual behavior within a society. Kotler and Keller (2007) emphasize that culture fundamentally shapes desires, reference behaviors, and the core of human conduct. According to Prasetyo and Ihalauw (2005, p.184), culture exerts a significant external influence on consumer behavior, encompassing various societal aspects such as language, knowledge, laws, religion, dietary habits, music, art, technology, work patterns, products, and other elements that define a society's characteristics. Culture involves shared meanings, rituals, norms, and traditions common among members of a society or organization, playing a pivotal role in shaping individuals' desires and reference behaviors—attributes often transmitted across generations through family and the social environment. Culture represents a form of identity for a country and, as a principal concept in anthropological studies, it includes aspects like knowledge, technology, values, beliefs, habits, and behaviors that are innate to humans (Gauri et al., 2023).

Sub-Culture

Each culture is made up of smaller sub-cultures, which provide its members with specific social characteristics and experiences. These sub-cultures include aspects such as nationality, religion, racial group, and geographic region (Kotler and Keller, 2007). Solomon (2004) explains that sub-cultures consist of members who have shared beliefs and experiences that distinguish them from members of other sub-cultures. These commonalities can relate to age, race, ethnic background, or place of residence. The age factor also has a significant impact on consumption behavior. Schiffman and Kanuk (2008) state that sub-cultures break down society in more detail into various socio-cultural and demographic variables, such as nationality, religion, geographic location, race, age, gender, and even employment status. Members of certain sub-cultures have values, beliefs, and habits that separate them from members of other sub-cultures within the same society.

Parasocial Interaction

Parasocial interaction is a one-sided relationship between an individual and a media figure, as first conceptualized by Horton and Wohl in 1956 and further discussed by Stever in 2013. It describes the varying levels of attachment that fans have with their idols, ranging from non-pathological, where the interest does not interfere with daily life, to pathological obsession, which can disrupt normal life activities. Horton and Wohl further described this interaction as pseudo, where the celebrity may deliberately project a persona that encourages the audience to respond as if there is real intimacy between them and the fan (Wardani & Kulsulma, 2021). These parasocial relationships, often mediated by the consumption of media, are sometimes viewed by fans as real interpersonal relationships, despite being one-directional-from fans to celebrities (Sitasari, Rozali, Arulmsari, & Setyawan, 2019). Sokolova and Kefi (2020) argue that the virtual relationship between celebrities and fans is perceived by the fans as an actual interpersonal relationship. Such relationships are considered one-way because typically, especially among younger fans, there is a feeling of closeness to their idol celebrities, although the celebrities themselves might not be aware of the individual fans (Sulianti et al., 2018). In the realm of K-Pop, parasocial interactions have multifaceted impacts, including the economic impact of fans' excessive spending, psychological effects such as obsession and delusion, and the risk of unethical behaviors like sasaeng fans invading their idols' privacy. Social media plays a significant role in facilitating these parasocial interactions, offering fans accessible avenues to follow and engage with their idols. The positive aspects of these interactions include changes in outlook on life, increased motivation, and feelings of support provided by idols to fans through social media platforms.

Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior studies how a person makes decisions to use available resources (time, money, and effort) to obtain consumer goods, including what, why, when, where, how much, how often to buy, and how long they use (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2008). Kotler (2001), Factors that influence consumer behavior are cultural, social, personal, psychological factors. Some of these factors are not considered by marketers but must actually be taken into account to find out how far these consumer behavior factors influence consumer purchases. Given the increasingly dynamic development of technology, humans are required to

act quickly and precisely so as not to lose the competition. Kotler (2002), in increasing competition, each company must be able to win this competition by displaying the best products and being able to meet consumer tastes that are always developing and changing. (Adam. 2018). In an article written by Suiani (2017) states that consumer behavior is the study of how individuals, groups and organizations choose, buy, use and place goods, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy their wants and needs. Consumers can be divided into two, namely individual consumers and industrial consumers. Individual consumers or end consumers are individuals who make purchases to meet their personal needs or household consumption. (Sunarto, 2018)

Social Media in the 5.0 Era

Society 5.0 is a concept that emphasizes human-centric technology, deeply intertwined with the rise of social media as a primary platform for media engagement and digital community activities in this era (Ina, 2019). Social media refers to online platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and TikTok, which allow individuals to interact, share information, and communicate virtually (Gatot, 2019). These platforms play a significant role in the development and maintenance of parasocial relationships, fostering the illusion of strong friendships between fans and their idols. Such interactions on social media can have implications for individual development, including life satisfaction and well-being, as they mirror real-life social interactions (Kim & Kim, 2020). Today's advanced information technology has made media consumption, especially internet media, substantial. Consumptive behaviors, such as forming parasocial relationships through the purchase of paid apps for direct interaction with idols, provide emotional gratification to fans (Naswa, 2022). One such app is Lysn, which allows for direct communication between fans and their favorite idols globally (Naswa, 2022). However, the convenience offered by social media also has a downside, influencing user behavior in potentially negative ways. Users can build relationships with their idols by following and subscribing to their content on social media platforms (Sokolova & Kelfi, 2020). Scientific studies related to parasocial relationships and celebrity endorsement, such as those by Lacap et al. (2023), Wang and Liu (2023), and Närvänen et al. (2020), have explored the role of celebrities and the influence of social media on credibility, branding, and purchase decisions. These studies suggest that parasocial relationships can directly and indirectly relate to purchase intentions through social media interactions (Aw and Labrecque, 2020). Chung and Cho (2017) noted that parasocial relationships have become more open in the new media environment, with audiences becoming friends rather than just followers of celebrities.

Adolescents

Based on data from the World Health Organization, adolescents are children aged between 10-18 years (Amdadi et al., 2021). Adolescence is an age group ranging from 12 to 21 years, divided into three periods: early adolescence (12-15 years), middle adolescence (15-18 years), and late adolescence (18-21 years) (Monks et al., 2002: 262). It is a transitional period from childhood to adulthood (Hurlock, 1997:207). During adolescence, individuals experience significant physical and psychological changes. These changes are rapid and are often influenced by trends and fashions. Teenagers' consumption choices

are often influenced by the activities they engage in, the influence of peers, and how they want to be seen by their generation (Kasali, 2001:195). Adolescence is a transition period from childhood to adulthood. Various physiological, social and emotional changes at that time have occurred, previously women entered menstruation and men had their first wet dream (Amdadi et al., 2021). In developing this article, it is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the influence of K-Pop sub-culture and parasocial interaction in the context of adolescent consumer behavior in the era of society 5.0 in Indonesia. Thus, this research will provide guidance for marketing practitioners, companies, and researchers to better understand how to design effective marketing strategies to reach and understand the teenage consumer market influenced by Korean pop culture. In addition, this research is also expected to provide insights into how Indonesian teenagers interact with K-Pop celebrities through social media and how these interactions influence their consumption decisions.

METHOD, DATA, AND ANALYSIS

The research method used is descriptive qualitative research method using data sources from relevant literature and research. In this study, the object of the data sought is research articles that discuss K-Pop sub-culture and its influence on adolescent consumer behavior in Indonesia through parasocial interactions. The design used in this research is Systematic Literature Review (SLR) or systematic literature review, where the stages of the literature review method are to identify, evaluate, and interpret all findings on a research topic. With the use of the SLR method, a systematic review and identification of articles can be carried out, where in each process there are steps or protocols that have been determined (Triandini et al., 2019). To obtain relevant articles, the first step was to conduct an electronic search using several keywords, such as "parasocial interaction", "sub culture", "consumer behavior", "K-Pop" and "teenagers". The search was conducted through data bases on Google Scholar, Scopus, Semantic, Sage Journals and Science Direct. The year of publication of the article ranges from 2016 to 2023. The articles were international articles and locally published articles in Indonesia. Each article was assessed for eligibility based on the abstract, case and essence of the article. Then, due to the limited data from articles such as the definition of culture, data is also taken from text books that discuss consumer behavior and culture. The author took opinions from several previous authors such as Schiffman (2008), and Kotler and Keller (2007). The limitation of this article is that the data reviewed only comes from 30 research publications due to time constraints. For each selected publication, data was extracted based on: author; year of publication; title; journal or publisher; type of study analyzed; definitions used; topics covered (K-Pop culture, sub-cultures, para-social interaction, social media and consumer behavior) and theories.

Then, after the data from the article is obtained, a synthesis is carried out to obtain a definition of the related variables of this research, such as: sub-culture, consumer behavior, K-Pop, para-social interaction, teenagers and social media. Synthesis is done by collecting several definitions from each article to get a separate definition according to the author. After synthesizing the variables above, the next step is to discuss the variables above. We want to know how the role of each variable based on the articles we have collected.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Today Korean culture has spread to various parts of the world and Indonesia is no exception. With the development of technology, K-pop (Korean pop) quickly entered the realm of the Indonesian industry. This can be seen from the development of K-pop culture that has spread widely in Indonesia. The

meaning of Korean culture here is all elements that characterize Korea such as films, Korean drama (Korean dramas), food, and also hanbok (Melian et al., 2021). This widespread K-Pop phenomenon certainly has an impact on Indonesian society, especially K-Pop fans who are commonly called K-Popers (K-Pop Lovers) or K-pop lovers, especially teenagers.

Late adolescents, according to Monks (2002), have certain characteristics, including a stronger interest in intellectual aspects, a desire to engage in social interactions and new experiences, the formation of a stable sexual identity, a shift from egocentrism (self-centeredness) to a balance between self-interest and the interests of others, and the development of an understanding of the boundaries between themselves and the general public.

Adolescents' consumption choices are influenced by their peers, their activities, and the desire to be accepted by the peer generation. Teenagers' interests can also be influenced by peers. One of them is interest in K-pop culture, which is a pop culture that is currently booming. Similar interests among peers can encourage teenagers to form communities or fandoms based on similar interests, one of which is interest in Korean culture called Korean Wave. Fans who love Korean Wave, especially in music, are called K-popers. Through the K-pop community or fandom, solidarity among members will increase. This is due to the awareness of being one unit based on common interests. The high interest of teenagers in K-pop culture can be seen from the K-pop concerts held in Indonesia in the following table:

Table 3.1. Konser K-Pop di Indonesia

Girlband/Boyband	Year
Fan meeting Lee Jong Suk, Fan meeting Niel, Konser TXT, Fan Conference Super Junior D&E, DPR	2023
NCT Dream, IKON, TXT, NCT 127, Kim Sejong, We All Are One K-pop, Stray Kids, Eric Nam, Head in The Cloud, Ji Chang Wook	2022
NU'EST, BTS, NCT 127, TWICE, Seventeen	2021
Super Junior, Blackpink, Eric Nam, Lucas Ways, Epic High, Heizi	2020
Blackpink	2019
Wanna one, Twice, BTOB, Winner, iKon, GOT7, Kard, Nu'Est W	2018
BTS, CN Blue, Monstra X, Red Velvet, EXO, B.A.P, Gfriend, Astro, NCT127 (KBS Music Bank World Tour), Seventeen	2017
EXO, SNSD, Seventeen, Astro, iKON	2016

Reference: Ulul Azmi, 2023

The development of K-pop or Korean Wave has experienced a significant increase throughout the world so that it has an impact in various aspects of both economy, social, and culture. In the economic aspect, the development of K-pop has encouraged a consumptive attitude for Korean fans based on the development of globalization, giving rise to capitalism. Consumptive behavior carried out by K-pop fans can be in the form of purchasing K-pop stuff which includes albums, photocards, clothes, accessories, and other merchandise related to idols admired by K-pop fans. K-pop fans perform K-pop stuff consumption behavior based on desire rather than need. This is described by Baudrillard in his consumerism theory which states that rationality in fulfilling needs is no longer based on fulfilling needs but rather on fulfilling desires. The results showed that teenagers in Indonesia who are K-pop fans. In buying K-pop stuff based on a hobby to collect K-pop stuff and as an investment because the K-pop stuff will be resold.



Figure. 3.1. NCTzen photocard collection

The influence of K-Pop culture on adolescents and their fans in the context of social media has been a major concern in several previous studies. These studies revealed various aspects relevant to this phenomenon, ranging from social media dependence to parasocial interactions between fans and their idols. These findings reflect the complexity of the relationship between K-Pop culture and adolescent behavior in the age of information technology. In this study, we will continue our exploration of this topic by focusing on the impact of fanaticism, consumption behavior, and social interactions within K-Pop fan communities.

Table 3.2. Previous Research

Tittle	Author, Year	Place of researc	Result
Efek Ketergantungan Remaja K-Popers terhadap Media Sosial di Kota Palu	Khairil, et al (2019)	Palu	The research findings show that access to information related to K-Pop has a positive and significant relationship with the level of dependence on social media use. The results of this study highlight that adolescents' dependence on the use of social media, especially in accessing K-Pop information, is an inevitable reality. The role and function of social media is enormous and has become a social necessity in the era of openness and the development of information technology.
Hubungan Kendali diri dan Pengaguman Terhadap Idola pada Remaja Penggemar K-Pop	Malida Fitria (2019)	Samarinda	It was found that 214 or 98.68% of teenage K-pop fans in Samarinda City do activities such as looking for the latest information on social media about their favorite idols. In addition, 208 or 95.85% of teenage K-pop fans did activities such as watching music videos and shows featuring their idols, and 211 or 97.25% of teenage K-pop fans would feel sad when their favorite idols experienced something bad.
Fanatisme Penggemar K-Pop dalam Bermedia sosial Instagram	Asfira, et al (2019)	Malang	It was found that Fanaticism behavior of fans is not only seen from how far they love Korean idols but also in social media, the hall can be seen from the various activities that have been carried out on Instagram and the response of K-Pop fans in responding to hoax and negative information from K-Pop idols.

Anatisme dan Lunturanya Nilai Kebudayaan Gen Z: Dampak Trend K- Pop	April, et al (2023)	Mataram	In this study found various negative impacts caused by the influence of the entry of k-pop foreign culture, namely the attitude of excessive fans, fanaticism towards teenagers, the emergence of an attitude of excessive self-image of the influence of drama shows, wasting time and money for useless things, and Insomnia or difficulty sleeping.
Interaksi Parasosial Dan Tingkat Loyalitas Konsumen Remaja Akhir Penggemar Korean Pop (K- Pop) Di Samarinda	Kharisma, et al (2023)	Samarinda	The findings of this study are that fans' parasocial interactions tend to feel a deeper connection when they have similarities in beliefs, attitudes, and interests. fans engage in parasocial interactions between idols and their fans to make the idol one of the role models or role modes. And social factors also have an influence in making decisions to purchase merchandise related to idols. The author found that such as the environment or family of the informants did not give a negative response to the purchase of merchandise so that fans could comfortably buy merchandise with the money they had set aside and saved.

Parasocial interaction is an interaction created between fans and idols that appears in various media based on the affective bond felt by someone towards idols in the media. In the media there is communication that creates a feeling in the fans so that they feel they have a bond with the idol. There are three levels to the parasocial interactions that occur between fans and their idols, namely, first, entertainment social value exists at this stage fans find their idols as a release from their daily lives, by looking for sharing information on their favorite idols through social media which can be easily accessed anywhere and anytime with various content and features presented by social media helping fans to continue to feel close and know the various activities carried out by the idol. This increases the intensity of parasocial interactions that exist between fans and idols. Second, Intense Personal Feeling, in this stage fans can feel a deeper closeness to their favorite idols. (K. Wulandari et al., 2023).

In line with parasocial interaction theory, parasocial interactions that occur in fans and idols arise due to virtual meetings through social media which make fans feel that the idol is part of their environment or is a close friend. The use of social media can build relationships with idols by subscribing and following various content on the idol's social media (Sokolova and Kefi, 2020).

Parasocial interactions are generally considered to fulfill some emotional needs in social relationships just like face-to-face interactions. This is because fans believe that they share beliefs, values and interests with each other between idols and fans through social media, such as clicking the "like" button and providing comments. In parasocial interactions fans tend to feel a deeper connection when they have similar beliefs, attitudes and interests. This is expressed by fans that having similarities such as in terms of age, having similar hobbies to having similar traits makes them feel more connected and understand what their idols feel.



Figure. 3.2. Celebrating an idol's birthday Celebrating an idol's birthday is important because it shows how much we care about them (source: Mut)

From the discussion of this article, it appears that K-Pop has a significant influence on the culture and behavior of adolescents in Indonesia. Parasocial interactions, which allow teenagers to feel closer to their K-Pop idols through social media, can have complex psychological and behavioral impacts, including excessive consumption. In this context, social media plays an important role in facilitating interactions between fans and their idols. Horton and Wohl proposed the parasocial interaction theory in 1956. This theory addresses the relationship between audiences and famous figures in the media. Parasocial interaction describes how audiences can feel close and emotionally involved with famous figures, such as their K-Pop idols.

The role of culture and sub-cultures in shaping adolescent consumer behavior. K-Pop is one of the sub-cultures that influence the consumption preferences and social interactions of teenagers in Indonesia. It also reflects how information and communication technologies, particularly social media, have helped facilitate parasocial relationships and influence consumer behavior.

However, keep in mind that this article mostly contains excerpts from existing literature without any more in-depth analysis or original research results. Therefore, this article is more of a literature review than empirical research. The author suggests that if you want to explore this topic further, there is room for further research that may include surveys or case studies to dig deeper into the influence of K-Pop and parasocial interactions on adolescent consumer behavior in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study is that K-Pop culture has rapidly penetrated Indonesia through technology and social media, and this has changed the consumer behavior and preferences of teenagers in Indonesia. Parasocial interactions between K-Pop fans and idols through social media allow fans to feel close to their idols, influence consumptive consumption behavior, and create communities based on common interests. This article also reflects on the impact of social media in facilitating parasocial interactions and influencing adolescent consumer behavior. In addition, K-Pop as a sub-culture also influences the consumption preferences and social interactions of teenagers in Indonesia, reflecting the role of culture in shaping consumer behavior. However, this study has limitations, namely the data taken from a limited number of research publications due to time constraints. Therefore, there is room for further research that could involve surveys or case studies to delve deeper into the impact of K-Pop culture and parasocial interactions on adolescent consumer behavior in Indonesia.

The theory of parasocial interaction proposed by Horton and Wohl in 1956 is still relevant and applicable to the context of Korean pop culture, particularly the K-Pop sub-culture. This research also demonstrates an understanding of how cultures and sub-cultures such as K-Pop influence adolescent consumer behavior through parasocial interactions. Therefore, parents, educators, and practitioners who work with adolescents need to understand the influence of K-Pop and parasocial interactions in guiding adolescents to develop healthy and balanced consumptive behaviors. In addition, the K-Pop industry and marketers can also utilize this knowledge in designing more effective marketing strategies to reach the adolescent market in Indonesia.

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